

`Minutes
VA Child Day Care Council
VDSS – 7 N. 8th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

May 12, 2005

Present

Gail Johnson, Chair
Deborah Gardner
Lisa Shelburne
Jeff Walton
Judith Beattie
Norman Crumpton
Terry Davis
Susan Ballard
William Tobin
Charles Finley
Nancy Read Smith
Novella Ruffin
Margaret Collins
Carol Logue
Susan Hackney
Anita Simpkins
Rose Ann Sharp
Kristi Snyder
Kim Hulcher
Buddy Hyde

Absent

William Harvey, Vice Chair
Rosemary Burton, Secretary
Jay DeBoer
Dona Huang
Alonzo Jones
Donna Thornton
Donna Peters
Cleo Sims

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gail Johnson at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2005.

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Johnson welcomed members, guests and staff to the Council Meeting.

She advised that terms will expire in June 2005 for Donna Thornton, Lisa Shelburne and herself unless reappointed. Chairman Johnson mentioned a special message of appreciation to Donna Thornton and Lisa Shelburne for their long term, dedicated and passionate services to this Council.

Birthday wishes to Judith Beattie who celebrates her 81st birthday today.

Wishes for a speedy recovery were sent to Donna Peters.

Members expressed their sympathy to Bethany Geldmaker for the loss of her mother.

Chairman Johnson welcomed Aubrey (Buddy) Hyde to the Council. Buddy represents the Department of Fire Prevention Services Programs.

Public Comment

The following citizens provided public comment as is listed as an attachment to these minutes:

Cheryl Repetti
Sherrie Lee
Kathleen Philpott Costa
Jackie Handly

Approval of Minutes

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Crumpton) and seconded (Mr. Finley) moved to approve the January 2005 Minutes as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Crumpton) and seconded (Mr. Finley) moved to approve the March 2005 Minutes as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

Chair's Report

Chairman Johnson advised she had been interviewed by the press on several recent occasions regarding the Council regulation and roll out of the Dolphin Program.

Ms. Johnson advised the department has a new Commissioner. He is Mr. Anthony Conyers. She met with him several weeks ago. He sent his regrets for being unable to attend Council meeting today due to a prior commitment at the League, but wanted to express his desire in working with the Council. He plans to attend the next Council meeting.

Ms. Johnson reintroduced Buddy Hyde to the Council. He provided members with a brief bio and members, in turn, introduced themselves. Ms. Johnson advised that orientation would take place within the next several months when all newly appointed members are in place.

Child Day Care Related Legislation/Regulation Review

Richard Martin, Manager of the Office of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs provided members with a copy of the Status of Regulations effective May 12, 2005. (A copy of this handout is attached to the original minutes housed in the home office.)

Committee Reports

Bethany Geldmaker advised the Committee on Public Participation Guidelines had met in March. A copy of handouts was provided to members (attached to original minutes housed in the home office). Ms. Geldmaker advised no public comment had been received.

Action Items

22 VAC 15-10

Public Participation Guidelines

The purpose of this regulation is to improve clarity and implement recent legislative changes.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Hackney) and seconded (Ms. Smith) moved to approve Regulation 22 VAC 15-10 entitled Public Participation Guidelines as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 15-51

Background Checks for Licensed Child Day Centers

The purpose of this change is to incorporate recent change to Code of Virginia that a child day center may hire for compensated employment persons who have been convicted of not more than one misdemeanor offense under 18.2-57 if 10 years have elapsed following the conviction, unless the person committed such offense while employed in a child day center or the object of the offense was a minor.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Crumpton) and seconded (Mr. Finley) moved to approve Regulation 22 VAC 15-51 entitled Background Checks for Licensed Child Day Centers as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

HB 1550

Mr. Martin provided members with a copy of HB 1550 as approved March 20, 2005. He advised that the Council would need to make a motion they had reviewed all regulations under their purview by July 1, 2006 regarding child day programs to determine whether they adequately provide for the notification of parents, legal guardians, or other persons duly authorized to pick up a child in the event a child sustains a significant physical injury while under a program's care.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Walton) and seconded (Mr. Crumpton) moved to have Chairman Gail Johnson send a letter to the appropriate persons advising that the Council has reviewed all regulation under their purview regarding child day programs to determine whether they adequately provide for the notification of parents, legal guardians, or other persons duly authorized to pick up a child in the event a child sustains a significant physical injury while under a program's care. Motion carried with all in favor.

Future Meeting Schedule

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Crumpton) and seconded (Ms. Gardner) moved to approve the 2005-2006 meeting schedule as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

Meeting dates:

July 14, 2005 (no action items so Council will not meet)
September 8, 2005
November 10, 2005
January 12, 2006
March 9, 2006
May 11, 2006

Alternate Meeting dates (if urgent business to be addressed)

August 11, 2005
October 13, 2005
December 8, 2005
February 9, 2006
April 13, 2006
June 8, 2006

It was noted that alternate meeting dates will only be used when there is Council business to handle. Chairman Johnson advised of her conversation with Mr. Martin regarding Council regulation status and they had concluded a meeting will not be necessary until September 2005.

New Business

Chairman Johnson (with Council approval) adjusted the agenda to name a Nominating Committee to recommend a Vice Chair and Secretary. The committee members were Jeff Walton, Dr. Ruffin, and Kim Hulcher.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Walton) and seconded (Ms. Smith) moved to approve the Committee's recommendation to retain William Harvey as Vice Chair and Rosemary Burton as Secretary. Motion carried with all in favor.

Mr. Crumpton asked if a representative from the Office of the Attorney General could attend the September meeting and school members on their duties and the Administration Process. Chairman Johnson agreed this item would be on the September agenda.

Presentations

Kathy Glazer, Public Relations and Marketing Manager provided an update on the Governor's Early Childhood Initiatives. (A copy of this presentation is housed with the official Minutes at the VDSS home office.)

Ms. Glazer also provided Council with information on the Governor's Early Childhood Summit May-June 2005. Members were asked to contact her if they would like to attend.

Kathy Gillikin, Quality Child Manager of the Division of Child Care and Development provided members with an update on Child Care Provider Professional Development. A copy of this presentation is housed with the official Minutes at the VDSS home office.

On behalf of Mary Ward, Ms. Gillikin provided an update on the State Plan. There will be public hearings across the state on this plan. Members will be advised of these dates as soon as they are available.

Carolynne Stevens, Manager of Licensing Programs and staff Jeff Williams and Debbie Beirne provided an overview of the new Child Day Care Standards: what's been accomplished thus far; what is in progress and review of sample questions being received regarding training issues.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Hulcher) and seconded (Mr. Tobin) moved to have a liaison or committee appointed to review and assist with how this regulation is being interpreted the first year.

Much discussion followed. Many of the members felt it was the job of the department to handle this and not the Council. **Motion was rescinded by Ms. Hulcher with Mr. Tobin in agreement.**

Council Check In

Ms. Smith advised they had opened an infant/toddler section in April.

Ms. Ruffin thanked members for their cards and emails sent during her recent illness.

Ms. Simpkins advised IACCEPT had recently had their annual conference. She also asked that members receive a written copy of public comments received during the meeting.

Ms. Snyder asked how the Council would be notified if Ms. Johnson were not reappointed.

Ms. Johnson thanked the members for all their dedication and hard work. She also asked that minutes reflect the hard work Aimee Lapp Payne had done on behalf of the Council. Ms. Lapp-Payne has recently moved out of state.

Adjournment

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Smith) and seconded (Ms. Beattie) moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:39 p.m. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Rengnerth

Attachment

Public Comment

Cheryl Repetti, Centreville Preschool, Inc., Virginia Cooperative Preschool Council provided the following public comment:

My name is Cheryl Repetti, I am President of the Board of Directors of Centreville Preschool. I am here today on behalf of my school and the 24 other member schools of the Virginia Cooperative Preschool Council. In addition to my comments I am submitting a statement from Kathleen Philpott Costa, who serves on the VCPC Board.

We appreciate that the Council has made an exception for cooperatives regarding the 16 hours of training for paid teachers and aides. But there has been a great deal of confusion about who should be trained, and about the form and content of the training for parents. We thank the Council for taking time to clarify these matters for all concerned.

We are asking that in implementing the new training regulation that the following guidelines be considered:

That the 4 hours of training be applicable only to parents who work in the classroom. Ideally we would like to see that training made mandatory only for those parents included in the staff-to-child ratios.

That the training be for orientation purposes and required only for new members.

That cooperative schools be allowed to build the training into our existing orientation and education programs and otherwise allow us to use some at-home alternatives to give us the flexibility we need to administer a training program.

Lastly, we ask that the training content be proportionate to the time cooperating parents spend in the classroom and the role parents play.

There are three key facts about parent cooperatives that form the basis of our requests and that we hope the Council will be mindful of:

- 1) parents who assist teachers in the classroom do so on an average about 10-12 times a year;
- 2) not all parents who are members of cooperatives work in the classroom or are included in the staff-child ratios; and

- 3) Cooperatives require far more of parents than just working in the classroom.

No one “owns” a cooperative preschool because they are nonprofit corporations. But parents “own” the schools in every other sense.

Most cooperatives require, in addition to working in the classroom, that parents do maintenance work and that they do some sort of committee work: everything from fundraising, to mowing the lawn, to being on the Board of Directors. This is an obligation to the school, part of a membership agreement that each parent signs. So if you’ve heard that we’re complaining about four hours of training for our parents, it is because parents have already committed so many hours to the school.

That is why we are asking to build the required training hours into our already established orientation and parent education programs. And that is why we were asking for flexibility. A large child-care center may have to train a staff of 10 or 15, coops have to train staffs of 65 and 130. The ability to use at-home readings or videos and to conduct some training over the course of the school year will help to make that task feasible.

The task of monitoring and documenting parent training will also be easier if it is narrowly focused on those parents included in the staff ratios. To accommodate two-income families, many coops have options where parents do not have to work in the classroom, or they may only be required to be in the classroom 3 or 4 times a year. Other schools have chosen to meet ratios with paid staff, but still ask parents to coop, so there are 3 adults in each classroom. We think that mandatory and documented training should apply only to those parents who are included in the staff-child ratios.

Lastly, parents who coop do so on a rotating basis, the work is shared among all the parents in a class. So any individual parent is only in the classroom, on average 10 or 12 times a year. The content of required training should be proportionate to the time parents spend in the classroom. For example, with recognition of abuse and neglect, parents are not mandatory reporters and they aren’t in the class often enough to make the sort of observations that would lead to a founded report. So they rather than the level of training required for paid staff, something like awareness training is more appropriate. First aide training should similarly be focused on simple and routine matters like knowing the procedure for reporting an injury rather than CPR or administration of medicine. We should avoid creating expectations that parents cannot adequately fulfill.

We think an orientation program focused on licensing requirements and expectations relevant to the routine jobs parents do, such as helping with snack or encouraging children’s creative expression at the easel is appropriate. Similarly parents should know emergency procedures. We can invite speakers to address child development or children’s art. We can do this in the course of our membership meetings, classroom orientations, and parent education programs. We do not believe that the formal model of continuing education that is used for paid teaching staff should be applied to cooping parents.

Thank you.

Sherri Lee, CTRS

Parks and Recreation Supervisor

All professionals in this field would agree that we should always be looking for ways to improve the quality of programs entrusted with the care of children. The first step is to have qualified staff. Without them, the rest is a mute point.

If staffing shortages are a reality with the current standards, how will agencies maintain appropriate staffing levels with the new required staff qualifications? The required changes in staff qualifications are significant.

The following illustrates our concerns:

- Increased educational requirements for the Program Director are unrealistic for a part time job
- Our program runs less than 2 hours a day
- PD is a part time position-minimal pay, no benefits, not leading to full time position
- Difficult position to recruit
- 72% of our PD qualify with HSD and do not have plans to go the college to pursue a related degree
- 52% of these PD have over 5 years experience with our Department
- Wish there had been some provision to grandfather those currently qualified
- Example, we have a PD with HSD and 26 years experience – unlikely this staff person will pursue college
- Increased training requirements should suffice to continue to qualify these individuals
- All for quality care and standards – but the Standards do not fit all entities – (appear to be focused on pre-school). – and once in effect may cause the number of affordable programs to decrease –Need standards for school-age and/or for programs operating minimal hours daily

Kathleen R. Philpott Costa, on behalf of the Virginia Cooperative Preschool Council (VCPC)

This public comment concerns 22 VAC 15-30-31 (c) (5) (Exception (b), under Staff Training and Development. This particular provision states that “Parents who participate in cooperative preschool centers shall complete four hours of orientation training per year.” For the reasons expressed below, the VCPC requests that the Child Day-Care Council clarify that annual “orientation training” includes not only academic training sessions on childhood development and education, but also the orientation that parents receive at their cooperative schools as part of their classroom participation and assistance duties. We have been concerned by inconsistent guidance from licensing inspectors on this training requirement. We have also been concerned by some “unofficial” guidelines from licensing inspectors indicating that only academic-style training, with live, hired, outside speakers, would be counted as parent training.

This kind of requirement could be costly for small, non-profit cooperative preschool centers, it could discourage new families from joining cooperative preschools because of the extra time burden, and it would simply be excessive and inappropriate for parents who do not purport to be the teachers and whose role is not the same as that of the paid teaching staff.

The VCPC currently has a membership of 25 cooperative preschools, although there are no doubt other cooperative preschools throughout the Commonwealth. We invite the Child Day-Care Council to browse our website at <http://www.geocities.com/vcpc1/> for a better understanding of how cooperative preschools operate. Briefly, a cooperative preschool is a non-profit preschool owned and/or operated by a group of parents and staffed by professional teachers. The parents volunteer to do some or all of the administrative work necessary to operate a successful school, so that the paid teaching staff may be freed up to focus intensively on curriculum and their classes. Parents also assist in the classroom, either as a teacher assistant or as an extra adult when there is already a teacher and a paid teacher assistant. However, while there is often considerable time commitment on a school committee such as fundraising, membership or maintenance, parents' actual time spent in the classroom may be as little as a few hours or a few classes per year.

Still, while parents do not act as teachers, their assistance benefits the teachers and the children, and they see great educational benefit for themselves in observing and helping in class and at the school. Parent education is already highly stressed in coop preschools, through classroom participation, open communication with teachers and regular school-wide membership meetings on school issues or childhood development issues. In short, the category of "cooperative preschool parents" is an exceptional one- it is a group of parents who are highly involved in their preschools and their children's educational and social development and who often commit hours of volunteer work to their children's preschool every month. Parents are constantly receiving "training" or "education" by virtue of their unique role in the preschool. Most or all of the VCPC member schools also already conduct and require a good amount of organized orientation training for their parents. This orientation training may include the following:

1. Attendance at school membership or board meetings with outside childhood development specialists presenting as speakers
2. Instructional meetings for parents relative to what cooping parents should do in the classroom (daily routine, conflict resolution, managing safety and behavioral incidents, following emergency procedures, following regulations regarding cleaning/sanitizing, bathroom assistance, etc.)
3. Class-wide teacher-parent meetings for the purpose of discussing a class's curriculum, childhood development milestones for the class, etc.
4. Review of written materials on any of the above with a follow-up review session with a teacher or other live present, if parents cannot attend meetings in person.

The VCPC asks, then, that the Child Day-Care Council consider the above categories of parent education to satisfy the 4-hour "orientation training" requirements of the new regulations (these are in addition to any TIPS calendar training session that would

qualify for any paid teaching staff, abuse and neglect recognition training and the up to 2 hours of CPR/first aid training that the new regulations permit).

We hope that the Child Day-Care Council views the parental involvement and education at cooperative preschools as the exemplary model that it is and resists imposing additional inconvenient, costly and time-consuming training requirements on parents who have already shown their dedication to childhood development and education.

Finally, the FCPC also requests that the Child Day Care Council confirm in a Technical Assistance document that the 4 hours of orientation training may take place over the course of the year, that parents who are members of a cooperative school for consecutive years not be required to repeat the same training every year, and that only parents who assist in the classroom be required to complete the new training (many working parents do not participate in the classroom).

Jackie Handly, President
Dulin Cooperative Preschool

Hi, here at Dulin preschool, a parent-run cooperative, school we have a concern about the new indoor resiliency requirement. We have a rainy day room with indoor climbing equipment. Currently, we have thick mats under our play equipment but they don't meet any official standard – but- the way I am reading the regulations –there is only one company in the entire U.S. that makes mats that do. Based on the new guidelines in the regulations we went to the “National Program for Playground Safety.” On that website there is only one company that has mats that meet the new indoor safety requirements. I called the one mat/carpet company and they said they are getting calls from all over Virginia. Makes sense if they are the only company out there.

We have a room that is 21' x 37.5' and, based on a rough estimate (not including shipping or installation), we are getting numbers from \$9,450.00 to protect from 3' fall heights to \$12,600.00 to protect from 6' fall heights. This numbers are a huge burden on a cooperative preschool with 54 families. We want to protect the children – and this is reflected through the use of the thick mats we have, however, it seems like the regulations are ahead of the manufacturing industry in terms of verifying the fall heights of mats and offering alternatives at different price ranges.

As I see it our school has two options – buy the carpet for \$10,000 plus dollars or get rid of all our climbing equipment. The room is small and it's been great to have the climbing equipment for gross motor play when it's raining or snowing outside.

At any rate, we think it's important that regulators understand the situation they are putting small preschools into.

We just put in new outside playground equipment 18 months ago and found we had a whole range of options to meet licensing standard from mulch that met fall depth and ADA licensing requirements for \$500 (that we ended up installing ourselves with the help of Boy Scouts) to rubber mats for \$20,000, which we did not choose. Perhaps the solution is for the regulators to find several alternative sources of approved indoor fall

mats rather than just one company. Maybe if more companies were approved we could find mats/carpets at a price we could afford.

The mat/carpet company I have been talking to is very professional and has a great product – we are just going to have to work to pay the price.

Just an update of how the regulations are impacting our school.