

**Stamford School Readiness Council Meeting**  
**Thursday December 12, 2013**  
**12:00 p.m.**  
**Conference Call**

***Council Members Present:***

Burke, Jennienne Peoples	Care to Care (Family Centers)
Feder, Karen	Abilis
Farrell, Anne	UConn Stamford
Garcia, Maritza	Adult Learning Center
Glenn, Sheila	ROSCCO Agency
Morrow, Polly	Pitney Bowes
Reardon, Ellen	Stamford Museum and Nature Center
Rigano, Sue	Stamford Public Education Foundation
Sabia, Michele	Stamford Public Schools
Wenz, Karen	First Presbyterian Nursery School

***Staff/Advisors/Guests:***

Arcuri, Donna	School Readiness Liaison, City of Stamford
Brennan, Karen	United Way of Western Connecticut
Cammarota, Karen	City of Stamford
Sargent, Carol	Childcare Learning Centers

**I. Welcome**

Polly O'Brien Morrow opened the meeting and welcomed all for calling in.

**II. Approval of Minutes from October 2013 Meeting**

The Council unanimously approved the minutes from the October 2, 2013 meeting.

**III. New Business**

- **School Readiness Council Bylaw Revision and Update:** Donna Arcuri and Karen Brennan updated the Council on the SRC bylaws revision. We are working with a pro bono attorney since the current bylaws are unsigned, unrecorded and not dated. We are tightening up the language and aligning our bylaws more closely with State of CT legislation. Karen informed us that the Collaborative will not have bylaws but will have membership guidelines. The Collaborative does not need to have formal bylaws because it is a group not mandated by any entity.

**IV. Regular Reports**

- Reports from St. Clement School, CLC, and APPLES (Stamford Public Schools) for November and were sent to the Council in advance of the meeting and are included here as Addendums A-C.

- Jennienne asked Carol Sargent about open teacher positions at CLC and Carol indicated that CLC has only one teacher position open which is a new position. They have an assistant teacher that is finishing her CDA and will hopefully be moving into that position.
- Michele Sabia informed the Council that the teacher from the School Readiness classroom in the APPLES program resigned and that SPS is very close to hiring a new teacher.
- Michele Sabia informed the Council of the new CT Early Learning and Development Standards webinars which will be held in December and January. Michele suggested we do a group viewing to avoid providers from being shut out of the webinar.

## **V. Announcements**

- Polly Morrow shared that Barbara Garvin-Kester will be transitioning from CLC to a new career path and wished her luck on her next venture.
- Polly also shared that this was Jennienne's last meeting with the Council since she will be heading in a new direction in her community service. Jennienne will be helping high school and college students prepare for their future. Jennienne informed the group that we can contact Denis Torres from Family Centers with any questions and Shannon Gregor will be the interim contact for home day care providers in Jennienne's absence.
- Karen Brennan announced that she will be sending a flyer for the Community Conversations event to be held on Saturday, January 25, 2014 from 9am – 12:30pm at UCONN Stamford.

## **VI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

**Addendum A: Fees and Subsidies**

**Stamford School Readiness Council**

**Fees and Subsidies**

Related documents: GP14-01, GP14-02, GP14-03 & Fee Schedule

The School Readiness Council (SRC) requires all programs to collect parent fees based on the School Readiness Sliding Fee Scale and/or Child Care Subsidies to complement the State's reimbursement for School Readiness. The funds collected by each program are to be utilized in the School Readiness program to enhance the program and/or services for children and families in order to ensure high quality. All programs shall collect parent fees based on the guidelines listed below:

1. For families whose incomes are less than 75% of the state's median income (SMI) guideline, SRC sub grantee's shall determine fees for School Readiness supported child care slots based solely on the School Readiness Fee Schedule.
2. For families whose incomes are greater than 75% of the state's median income (SMI) guideline, SR sub grantees shall determine fees for School Readiness supported child care slots based solely on the School Readiness Fee Schedule. **Families who claim incomes over 75% of the state median income may provide an estimate without documentation but must agree to pay the published cost of care.**
3. **Family income and family size need not be determined when a family agrees to pay the cost of care**
4. No family, regardless of the number of children participating in a SRC's sub grantee School Readiness program, shall be charged more than the calculated family contribution.
5. No family, regardless of income or regardless of the calculated fee on the State Fee Schedule, shall be charged a fee that exceeds the sub grantee published cost of care.
6. The Stamford School Readiness Council established the cost of care as the following:

Full Day/Full Year: A School Readiness Program in Stamford cannot charge a family more than their published cost of care.

Part Day/Part Year: A School Readiness Program in Stamford cannot charge a family more than their published cost of care;

School Day/School Year: A School Readiness Program in Stamford cannot charge a family more than their published cost of care.

7. Sub grantees shall annually publish their cost of care for School Readiness supported slots and shall file their published rate with their SRC.
8. Sub grantees shall not charge fees to families receiving TFA cash assistance whom have no earned income. In this case, there will be no fee assessed whether for the family or for a child in the family that is using the School Readiness supported slot.

9. Sub grantees shall charge fees to families receiving TFA cash assistance who have earned income.
10. The SRC shall approve or reject SRC sub grantee programs' written requests regarding the waiver of fees for part day program options.
11. All fees from families received by Sub-grantees (this includes School Readiness parent share and Care4Kids collections) shall be used to support the School Readiness program in the fiscal year they are collected. Programs may set up a separate non-interest bearing account to hold parent fees collected. Fees in May and June can be used in the next fiscal year. Requests to carry over additional fees must be approved by the local SRC and in turn the SRC must seek the permission of OEC. The sub-grantee is not to use more than 5% of the total parent fees collected for administrative costs (the total of line items 111A, 119, 200 (admin benefits) and 612).
12. Parent fee collections must be reported to the SRL biannually by February 15<sup>th</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, for the prior six months of parent fee collection. The provider must use the standard ED 114 budget form to report how fees were spent.
13. Providers are required to establish written fee policies and disseminate them to families and staff. Such policies shall address:
  - a. How family contribution is determined;
  - b. How fees are assessed and collected;
  - c. How income, family size, DSS cash assistance status, and any other eligibility factors are determined and verified;
  - d. How confidentiality of family information is maintained;
  - e. Procedures addressing fee forgiveness, failure to pay, any process for temporary reduction in assessed fees, the process for appealing a fee determination, and non-payment of fees, and must share them with School Readiness families.
14. Providers must use the parent share determination form developed by the SRC (attached).
15. Providers must notify families of fee changes 30 days in advance before changing the fee.
16. School Readiness programs may require a non-refundable registration fee of up to \$35 for School Readiness families.
17. Parent Fees must not be collected by "teachers" or persons working in the classroom. It is important that classroom staff partner with families in a meaningful way to support and foster a cohesive working relationship. This relationship is the core for sharing and gaining information pertaining to each child's approach to learning, progress and general health and well-being

### **Determining Family Income, Family Contribution and Fee**

Family Income and size are used to calculate the family contribution; and must be determined at the time of initial enrollment.

- a. Programs will use the family's completed tax return as well as the family's most recent pay stubs (reflecting one month's salary).
- b. In the event a family does not meet the minimum US tax filing requirements and are not required to file taxes, the family may provide a notarized letter from their employer indicating the monthly salary.
- c. In the event a parent/guardian has just started a new job, they must obtain a notarized letter from their employer that includes the persons start date, pay rate and hours worked weekly.

Family contribution and fee shall be determined by:

- a. Taking the computed gross annual family income;
- b. Finding where on the most recently published General Policy Fee Schedule the income falls under, and,
- c. For families whose incomes are less than 75% of the State's Median Income (SMI) guideline, SRC sub-grantees shall determine fees for School Readiness supported child care slots based solely on the School Readiness Fee Schedule. For families whose income is 75% of SMI or a higher – SRC sub grantees shall determine fees based solely on the School Readiness Fee Schedule. (Fee Schedule attached)

### **Outstanding Parent Balance**

If a parent/guardian/family has an outstanding balance at any state and/or federally funded program in the City of Stamford and refuses to pay this outstanding balance, then they are not eligible for any state and/or federally funded slot until the balance is paid in full. If a state and/or federally funded program within the City of Stamford has a parent who leaves, or is withdrawn for an outstanding balance, the program must immediately report the information to the school readiness office. The school readiness office will then notify all state and federally funded programs, within the City of Stamford, of the parent/guardian/families with an outstanding balance.

### **Homeless Families**

School Readiness Council sub-grantees shall not charge fees to families that provide proof of residency in a homeless shelter. Parents are encouraged to apply for Care 4 Kids assistance if they are eligible. If approved by Care 4 Kids, the sub-grantee can waive the set parent fee established by Care 4 Kids.

A program may not reduce the hours of care for a child who lives in a homeless shelter.

### **Hardship**

Each individual sub grantee reserves the right to collect less than the calculated fee but must maintain fiscal responsibility to ensure quality programming. The program may implement a hardship policy and submit this to the School Readiness Council. This policy should be based on individual family needs. This policy should be clearly stated to families upon enrollment and outline what the program considers as hardship as well as the documentation needed to determine hardship.

### **Work Requirements**

There are no requirements regarding work status.

## **School Readiness Councils**

The SRC shall approve or reject SRC sub grantee programs' requests regarding the waiver of fees for part day program options.

The SRC shall establish written policies and procedures for the implementation of this fee policy. Annually an updated copy of the fee policies and procedures approved by the SRC and signed by the Mayor and Superintendent, must be attached to the local School Readiness application.

## **Care for Kids**

- a. The Care4kids policy states guidelines on how programs should charge families. All School Readiness programs must assist families whose income is at or below 50% SMI and/or who meet other eligibility criteria, in applying for the Child Care Assistance Program. All eligible families are encouraged to apply for Care4kids.
- b. SRC's sub grantee School Readiness part-time programs that do not charge fees are ineligible to participate in the Care 4 Kids program.
- c. Income determinations made by the Care 4 Kids program shall be the income determination for the program.
- d. The SRC shall require its sub grantees to submit a monthly report of actual Care 4 Kids income and review submission.

## Addendum B: Staff Credentials

### Stamford School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Policy Regarding Staff Credentials

Related documents: GP 13-04

Stamford Policy on Notification of Staff Changes

The Stamford School Readiness Council understands that the most significant predictor of quality in early care and education programs is the qualifications of the staff in the classroom.

All School Readiness programs are required to meet School Readiness staff credential levels required by the State Department of Education as outlined in **GP 13-04**. **The standard affects the ENTIRE PROGRAM accepting state funds not just School Readiness Classrooms.**

- From July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020, "staff qualifications" means at least 50% of those with primary responsibility ("teacher") for a classroom of children hold a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education. (Specifics outlined in GP 13-04) from an approved institution of higher education.
- On or after June 30, 2013 "staff qualifications" means that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child day care program or school readiness program, 100% of those individuals with primary responsibility for a class of children hold a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education. (specifics detailed in GP 13-04)
- A "teacher" can be grandfathered if he or she has a bachelor's degree and 12 ECE credits but "teacher" can only teach in his or her current program. If he or she would like to move to another state funded program, the "teacher" must obtain ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) the CT Charts-A-Course system.

Each program must maintain and provide the School Readiness Council a monthly staffing schedule for each classroom program wide. This schedule must include the name of the person with primary responsibility ("teacher"), staff qualifications and classroom. This individual must be present for six hours of the Full-Day space type and for all hours of the School-Day and Part-Day space type. In the Extended Day space type, a qualified individual must be present for 2 ½ hours in a wraparound program and six hours when the Extended Day program operates during the summer. In some circumstances this may require revised staff schedules or require qualified administrators to be in the classroom in order to ensure that classrooms are appropriately staffed. The intent of this policy is to provide time for teachers in Full-Day and Extended –Day space types to have teaching time with children at least 6 hours per day and utilize at least one hour per day (non-contact time with children) for planning and appropriate learning experiences.

In the case of extenuating circumstances, such as a staff member's resignation, a program shall document their efforts, in collaboration with the SRC, to seek the most qualified person. If the program is unable to find an individual with the appropriate credentials, the School Readiness Liaison shall then contact the SDE to approve the hiring of an individual who meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Four-year degree;
- Associate degree;
- One Year Certificate in ECE with 30 credits from an approved institution; or
- Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

When such an individual is hired, they must agree to enroll in an ECE credit bearing course that will allow them to obtain 12 credits in ECE and/or child development from an approved institution within 18 months of being hired in order to meet the "qualified individual" requirements.

See attached GP 13-04 for specific language and requirements.

## Addendum C: Notification of Staff Changes

### Stamford School Readiness and Quality Enhancement

#### Notification of Staff Changes

##### Related (TA/SR – 02-03)

Programs receiving School Readiness funding are required to have available a **program wide** current list of all staff related to the early care and education program with credential status noted for each **as well as submitting said current list to the SR Council prior to each scheduled meeting**. All staff includes classroom staff, support staff, and administrators **throughout the entire program not simply School Readiness classrooms**. Evidence of staff education and credentials (including updated CDA certificate, copy of high school diploma, copy of bachelor's degree, etc.) must be kept in each staff person's file.

In the event that a program experiences major changes in staffing, the program must notify the Stamford School Readiness Liaison of the changes, coverage plans and replacement strategies.

**Notification must be in writing.**

Major changes include:

- the departure of a staff member with "qualified individual" requirements
- the departure of a Program Director
- the departure of two or more staff at any level in a short succession
- any departure that jeopardizes compliance with School Readiness requirements

**Important note:** experiencing staff changes and/or notification of the Stamford School Readiness Liaison of staff change does not exempt any program from its obligation to meet all State Department of Health, State Department of Education and local School Readiness Council requirements for appropriate staff/child ratios and staff credentials (see ALERT TA/SR-02-03, attached).

**Addendum D: Program Compliance**

**Stamford School Readiness Council**

**Program Compliance**

Funded Providers, while autonomous in their program operations, must comply with the standards as stated in the following documents:

- Valid and applicable Guiding Policy and Program Operation Policies from SDE/DSS;
- Grant RFP and proposal;
- School Readiness Council Policies; and
- School Readiness Legislation.

Need for clarification on the application of any of these standards is to be brought to the attention of the **Council through the School Readiness Liaison, Donna Arcuri, who can be contacted at 203-977-4589.**

## **Addendum E: CLC Monthly Report, September 2013**

- Program Utilization
  - a. Authorized Capacity – Not available at this time
  - b. Ages: Not available at this time
  - c. Children with disabilities - Not available at this time
  - d. Notes and Trends:
  
- Program Attendance:
  - a. 99% of enrollment
  - b. Notes and trends:
  
- Staffing
  - Open Positions-
  
  - a. Teacher-Cluster A, Assistant Teacher – Cluster A
  
  - b. Recruitment – ads on-line, local newspapers, postings at NCC.
  
- Training:
  - September 11 – Julie met with Directors and Coordinators from 10:00-12:00 and new staff from 1:30 – 3:00 on the learning experience Plans
  
  - September 18 –SST/ Tier 1 -Classroom Management – Transitions/Friendship Skills – Trish Behm
  
  - September 25 – SST/ Tier 1 - Emotional Literacy – Trish Behm
  
- Special Events/Activities:
  - Teachers are preparing lesson plans based on the Preschool Curriculum Standards and the individual needs of the children.
  - Part Day children returned to School September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>
  - UConn intern began in Cluster A – A1 – on September 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - Stamford Museum and Nature Center visits began last week of September and will run into October.
  - Clemente Fund Raiser- September 9 – 30 – proceeds pay for enrichment activities for children.
  - Lunch and Learn – Curriculum Overview – Margo Sandahl – September 26th
  - Yale has begun their work with the control groups – September 9th.

## **Addendum F: St. Clements School Monthly Report, September 2013**

### Program Utilization:

- School Day – School Year – 45 Students
- Pre – K 3 Class – 18
- Pre – K 4 Class #1-14
- Pre – K 4 Class #2-13
- All 25 School Readiness slots are full.

### Program Attendance:

- 100% with the exception of 3 registered children who were traveling and came back during the month of September to start school.

### Staffing:

- Vicki Druehl – Admin. Asst. – Resigned in August – School Office
- Nancy Mitchell – P/T Admin. Asst. – Started in August – School Office
- Audra Greer – Head Teacher – Resigned in July – Pre-K 3
- Alison Curcio – Head Teacher – Hired in August - Pre-K 3
- Marla Kerwin – Head Teacher – Resigned in August – Pre-K 4
- Currently interviewing for Head Teacher position – Pre-K 4 (Offer sent out.)

### Activities & Events:

- Sacred Heart School closed its doors at 1 Schuyler Avenue on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>. The program was moved on June 24<sup>th</sup>, to a new building at 535 Fairfield Avenue and is now called St. Clement Preschool. The State of CT has issued a new license with the name of St. Clement Preschool and is valid until 9/30/17. NAEYC has also been informed about our move. The final paperwork was approved at the end of August. All other pertinent agencies have also been informed regarding the address and new name.
- Staff members came in throughout the summer to unpack boxes and begin setting up their classrooms.
- SCP held its 1<sup>st</sup> Staff Meeting & attended a Professional Development on August 23rd. Staff members were treated to a Breakfast and Luncheon and attended Infant & Child CPR & Medication Training the same day.
- St. Clement Preschool opened its doors on September 26<sup>th</sup> starting the 2013-2014 school year.
- Parents attended a Parent Orientation Evening on September 12<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Director & Teachers gave tours, handed out Parent Handbooks, Crisis Management Handbooks and Community Resource Booklets as well as assorted information. Staff members gave a wonderful presentation regarding the CT Preschool Assessment Framework and Curriculum. Refreshments were served.

**Addendum G:** APPLES Early Childhood Educational Center, Stamford Public Schools Monthly Report, September 2013

Enrollment

17 children (11 boys and 6 girls) are enrolled in the class.

First Language

7 children speak Spanish as a first language, 9 speak English, 1 is Bilingual.

Family Contribution

To date, income verification puts most families below 26% of the State Median Income

Wait List

We have 14 children waiting for a spot. This is without any active recruiting