

**Butler County  
Child & Family Development Task Force  
September 17, 2008**

**VISION STATEMENT**

The Butler County Child and Family Development Task Force, with community support, ensure quality, available, and affordable childcare, early childhood education, children's health services and family support for all children in Butler County.

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees (18 total):** Audra Kenneson, Smart Start; Susan Harsh, Bright Beginnings; Jill Morrow, Bright Beginnings; Dale Tower, CDDO; Leslie Sissel, Rose Hill Parents-As-Teachers; Brooke Thomas-Fekken, Smart Start; Luann McFadden, Bright Beginnings; Jodi Evans, YMCA; Marcy Cone, Child Start; Kris Nicholson, KACCRRRA; Marla Canfield, ECAAP; Penny Blanchet, Head Start; Barb Roths, K-State Research and Extension; Kelly Kilgore, Butler County Health Department; Sue Givens, USD 490; Jamie Downs, Butler County Health Department; Sue Choens, Butler BCC Adult Education; Valecia Vogts-Scribner, Big Brothers/Big Sisters

**Introductions & Announcements:**

Audra welcomed the group and everyone introduced themselves.

- Audra reminded everyone that there is an upcoming First Aid training offered jointly from Smart Start/Child Start – October 4 in Andover. She also reminded everyone of the KAEYC Conference – Saturday, October 11.
- Kris reminded everyone to register to vote and encourage those around us to register to vote.
- Sue Givens announced that head count is down in her district and free/reduced lunch numbers are up. She also announced that there is a job fair this Friday/Saturday at the YMCA in El Dorado. Larger Employers will be there.
- Barb Roths handed out a page that has information on how to contact her and a list of resources, programs, and resources that are available through her office.

**Guest Presenters :**

- Valecia Vogts-Scribner: Executive Director Big Brothers/Big Sisters – Valecia provided magnets, business cards, and pamphlets to us. Big Brothers/Big Sisters is a non-profit organization that helps match caring mentors with children who need the friendship of a special adult in their lives. BBBS serve all areas of the county and are trying to get businesses involved. Last year they served 50 new kids in Butler County and 113 kids overall. Their goal this year is to have 55 new matches, and they believe they will meet and surpass that goal. They offer Bigs in Schools, where the mentor meets with the Little during the school day. They have worked with high school students to be Bigs in Andover, Flinthills and Douglass. In El Dorado it is more difficult to have this program because the high school is far away from most of the grade schools. The process to be a Big starts with contacting Valecia. There is an application and background checks must be run (KBI, SRS, DMV, Diversion, Sex Offender Registry). The applicant lists 4

references that are checked and then a lengthy interview takes place. If the applicant wants to be a community volunteer, a home visit takes place. A screening committee looks over all of the information and determines if the volunteer is accepted, declined, or more information is needed. If approved, the Big looks at a few files of Littles who Valecia believes would be good matches and chooses the one. Children can be referred by teachers, counselors, parents, etc. If anyone is interested in referring a Little or signing up to be a Big, contact Valecia Vogts-Scribner at 316.321.7763 or [vscribner@ksbbbs.org](mailto:vscribner@ksbbbs.org).

- Leslie Sissel: Rose Hill Parents-As-Teachers Coordinator – Leslie provided us with pamphlets and a recent newsletter from Rose Hill Parents-As-Teachers. This program is centered on home visits to families with children ages birth – 3; anyone and everyone with children of this age group are eligible to participate in the program. Parent educators share developmental information and what to look forward to as the child develops. If there is any concern about an issue, the parent educator obtains information for the parent, and makes referrals to other agencies if necessary. Each parent educator takes developmentally appropriate activities and a book to every session. They work on language, social/emotional, health, and fine motor skills. The parent educators are there as a resource. The curriculum is “Brain-Based Research.” Visits last approximately one hour and are held once every 4 – 6 weeks, the parent educator bases the closeness of visits on the family’s desire and concerns of the educator. They also have group meetings that are topic specific. Learning through play is important, so many of their activities are centered around play. Leslie told us of the lending library of over 400 story/picture books for parents to check out, and their Back Pack Buddy Club. There is no wait list right now in Rose Hill. They serve 39 families and have a goal of 60 – 70. They serve 50 – 55 children at any given time. They currently have 3 parent educators who fill 1.75 FTE. There is no cost to participating families. If anyone is interested in referring a family to Rose Hill’s PAT program, contact Leslie Sissel at 316.776.3348 or [lsissel@usd394.com](mailto:lsissel@usd394.com).

#### **Update on Early Childhood Grant:**

Audra provided an update on Butler County’s part of the Early Childhood Grant which will be submitted on or before Monday, September 22, 2008. At our August meeting, we discussed options for what to include in the grant. When asked to name the top four choices, we identified the following:

1. Explore Parents As Teachers
2. Mental Health Specialist
  - a. Personnel
  - b. Support Groups & Play Groups
3. Sliding Scale Supplement Families
  - a. Tied to training
  - b. Expand existing parenting classes
4. Additional Supplements to Providers to take Additional Children
  - a. Infants
  - b. Special Needs
  - c. Medical Cards

We kept these four areas in mind as they fit into the three overarching themes found in the Wichita MSA's Birth – K Alliance Strategic Plan and wrote for the following:

- Parent Support
  - Parents-As-Teachers (Program to serve El Dorado and Augusta, and to begin to serve Flinthills)
  - Two additional Incredible Years classes
  - Parent Support Group – Circle of Parents
- Mental Health
  - Additional Mental Health Specialist
- Quality Child Care
  - Child Care Scholarships to pay for ½ of the tuition for 20 children (1 child per family. Half of the children coming from underserved areas of the county).
  - 3 Infant Care Supplements
  - 3 Special Needs Supplements

We are in need of a 10% cash match.

**Other:**

Kris asked for clarification of what is happening in El Dorado with the licensing issue. Jamie Downs and Audra explained. El Dorado City Code states that child care homes need a permit to operate a business out of their homes. Currently, four providers operate a family child care home and do not live in that home, which goes against the code. There have been several meetings of city council and the zoning commission to discuss the matter. At a recent meeting of the zoning commission may providers, parents, and children came to ask them to not shut down the homes that are currently operating in this manner. Jamie pointed out that the code also states that no more than 25% of the home may be used for the business, though most child care homes use far more than 25%. The zoning commission has been asked by the city commission to revamp the codes.

**Next Meeting:** Our next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, October 15, 2008 from 11 – 1 pm Bradford Memorial Library in El Dorado. Please bring your own lunch. Jamie Downs will provide us with information about the Butler County Health Department and Marion Nichols will provide us with information about Mid-CAP.

*Note: If you or someone you know would like to be added to the mailing list for the Butler County Child & Family Development Task Force, please email Audra Kenneson at [akenneson@rui.org](mailto:akenneson@rui.org)*