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Growing Children, One by One...

MEMO

TO: Commissioners

FROM: Kathi Walker, Executive Director

DATE: December 28, 2011

RECOMMENDATION: For discussion purposes.

BACKGROUND:

First 5 El Dorado develops a five year Strategic Plan to provide a framework for program, fiscal and evaluation. The plan is reviewed annually at the March business meeting. The current plan will expire on June 30, 2012.

DISCUSSION:

Through the 2008-13 Strategic Plan, six Initiatives were developed to address researched based elements essential for developing a comprehensive early childhood system: Children's Health, Best Beginnings, Together We Grow, Ready to Read @ Your Library, High 5 for Quality and School Readiness. A Community Strengthening Initiative was developed to ensure Initiative services meet community needs. Community Strengthening Groups have been established in three regions of the county: Georgetown Divide, South Lake Tahoe and the Western Slope.

In preparing for the 2012-17 Strategic Plan, staff has engaged contractors, service providers, community partners in assessing the current Initiative services, identifying gaps and developing recommendations for the next five years. Three meetings were held with service providers to identify key elements and best practices used in existing Commission Initiatives. A total of six presentations have been made to community strengthening groups to provide an update and opportunity for feedback on the planning process. At the recommendation of the Commission, four meetings were held with community partners to discuss specific strategies for reaching families and draft a plan to integrate Commission Initiative services with existing services in the county.

Service Provider Meetings:

Commission staff convened contractors on July 21, August 21, and September 21, 2011 to discuss evaluation objectives, strengths and opportunities, current strategies, key elements, and best practices. From these discussions, it is clear that Commission Initiatives use similar key elements in delivering services to families:

- Assess a child's development.
- Develop relationships with parents and providers.
- Provide parent support as their child's first teacher.
- Offer flexible service delivery in location and frequency.

- Provide opportunities for parents and children to interact.
- Improve access to community resources and information.
- Meet families where they are geographically.

Based upon these strategies, staff identified five best practices currently implemented through Commission Initiatives.

- Conduct developmental screens.
- Partner caregivers with facilitators.
- Facilitate positive caregiver and child Interactions.
- Offer place based visiting in mutually agreed upon locations.
- Facilitate connection to community resources.

Staff reviewed the Commission Initiatives to identify the presence of key elements and best practices. The results demonstrated that with the exception of developmental screens, each Initiative had the same key elements and best practices.

At the September 21, 2011 planning meeting, Staff reviewed the five research based, best practices with contractors identifying strengths and opportunities. At the end of the session, service providers unanimously agreed upon three recommendations:

1. The Family Place library should be implemented at all branches in the county.
2. Parents as Teachers is the first choice in meeting family needs.
3. Early Steps to School Success is the second choice in meeting family needs.

Community Strengthening Meetings:

Staff presented the results from service providers at monthly Community Strengthening meetings in all three regions and requested feedback. Overall, three questions were asked: Will the Commission fund intensive services such as occupational therapists, will materials be available on the website, and what changes can be expected in existing Commission Initiatives. Staff reviewed the planning timeline emphasizing a draft plan would be presented at the January 9, 2012 Commission Meeting.

Community Partner Meetings:

The results from the service provider and community strengthening meetings were shared with Commissioners at the October meeting. Commissioners requested staff engage community partners providing services similar to Parents as Teachers and Early Steps to School Success; specifically, partners providing home visiting services.

Staff identified community partners who provided home visiting services in South Lake Tahoe and on the Western Slope and discussed Initiative services and partner services. The meetings were useful in identifying how Initiative services can best support partner services and resulted in agreements about referrals and collaborative training (Attached).

Commission Committee Meetings:

Commissioners have been engaged in the planning process on a monthly basis through committee meetings.

CONCLUSIONS:

Through various meetings, Commission staff have worked to develop a draft 2012-17 Strategic Plan for review at the January 9, 2012 Commission meeting and consideration at the March 19, 2012 meeting. Between January and March, Commission Committees will consider program and fiscal recommendations for the final plan. Staff will continue to engage community partners through Community Strengthening meetings.

Western Slope Home Visiting Meeting Notes
Monday, November 21, 2011 from 2-4 PM
First 5 El Dorado Commission Office

Partners in Attendance:

Angie Lind	Elizabeth Blakemore	Liz Dowell
Kaye Medellin	Wendy Wood	
Gail Healey	Lynnan Svensson	

Commission Staff: Kathi Walker and Rick Alford

Overall Agreements:

1. First 5 El Dorado Commission Initiatives can provide preventive services through outreach and education.
2. Targeted services can be provided by Initiative Partners with the following priorities:
 - a. Extended early learning supports are provided in a school readiness framework addressing the social, physical, emotional, language and learning needs of a child.
 - b. A child's development is assessed by using the ASQ, ASQ:SE and a health survey.
 - c. A family's needs are identified by a risk screen (Wendy or Kaye).
 - d. Services can be provided in the form of group socializations or place based visits.
 - e. Place based visits are offered to families with the understanding that after a maximum of three visits the family will be offered a cooperative visit with a partner agency.
 - f. Training should be provided on a regular basis and must include information on visitor safety, community agency referrals, and other local early learning opportunities.
3. Intensive services are provided by existing community partners: Head Start and Early Head Start, Family Connections, South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and El Dorado County Public Health Nursing.
4. If families are not eligible for partner services, the service will be referred to Public Health Nursing for services, if appropriate, or for a referral to another community agency.
5. Community Partners will have the opportunity to participate in shared training through a community training calendar.
6. Community Partners will better understand referrals through the development of a referral matrix.

Next Steps:

- Partners will communicate electronically and will agree to provide information for the referral matrix and training calendar.
- First 5 El Dorado will take the lead in drafting the referral matrix and training calendar.
- First 5 El Dorado will work with the Commission to address scopes of work and training frameworks.

Universal Services:

First 5 El Dorado Commission Initiatives have a focus on prevention by providing universal access to services. The universal access has the potential to reach previously unserved families and refer to existing community services. Those Initiatives are:

- Children’s Health
- Best Beginnings
- Together We Grow
- Ready to Read @ Your Library
- High 5 for Quality

Targeted Services:

In order to support families in preparing their children for school, additional supports can be provided to families in the areas of social, physical, emotional, language and learning. In order to identify the level of need, Initiative partners will use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the ASQ: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE). This screening tool is completed by the parent on a periodic basis and scored by an Initiative Partner. Dependent upon the score, families will be asked to complete one or more of the tasks:

- Work on specific activities at home with their child to address an area of need.
- Participate in a group activity with other parents facilitated by the Initiative Partner.
- Contact other community agencies for services or support.
- Recommend their child complete additional screens or assessments.

Referrals:

As mandated reporters, Initiative Partners will contact Child Protective Services if there is an immediate threat to the child or family. If the Initiative Partner suspects additional family needs, they can conduct up to three “place-based visits” for the purposes of completing a risk assessment tool. Based upon the outcomes of that assessment, the Initiative Partners will contact one of the following partners to conduct a “cooperative visit”:

- El Dorado County Office of Education, Head Start or Early Head Start Programs
- Family Connections El Dorado
- South Lake Tahoe Women’s Center
- El Dorado County, Health and Human Services Department, Public Health Nursing

The purpose of the “cooperative visit” is to work with other community professionals in assessing the child and family need, identifying the appropriate level of service and offer a “warm handoff” for families, introducing them to the service, the provider and assisting with the transition. If a family is not eligible for services and a need is identified, a referral will be made to public health nursing.

Universal Services: provide general information on health access, child development, literacy, quality child care and and community resources.

Children's Health

Best Beginnings

Together We Grow

Ready to Read @ Your Library

High 5 for Quality

Targeted Supports: provide individualized strategies for health access, child development and community resources through group socializations or 1-3 place based visits.

Children's Health

Best Beginnings

Together We Grow

Interventions: refer to appropriate community agencies for intensive services.

Head Start and Early Head Start

Famiy Connections El Dorado

South Lake Tahoe Women's Center

El Dorado County Public Health Nursing