

**CORNER COUNTIES EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITTEE MINUTES
MAY 4, 2010**

Attending: Heidi L, Linda O, Terri H, Kathy B, Jeri L, Julia C, Rachel J, Jeannette L, Julie S, Carlene S, Lori, Jenny E, Renee B, Angie L, Pam H

Following introductions and the approval of minutes from the previous meeting, Pam updated the group on RFP funding for the 2010-11 fiscal year. She said the area was cut \$80,092. Some of the preschool tuition dollars were backfilled from when the governor took them away in October.

CCEA board members have reviewed the proposals received, and have decided which ones to fund. Those receiving funding for FY 10-11 have been notified. Letters of acceptance to those programs will be sent out later this week.

Pam said the board will stand behind certain requirements for funding. Preschools will have to reach a 3-4-5 accreditation status or be enrolled in the QPPS to receive preschool tuition dollars. All families enrolled in preschool, receiving the tuition grants, will now have to pay some portion of their child's tuition. Pam thought the parent portion would be between \$5-25, with employment verification required.

Pam also said the board will continue to ask family support programs to work toward becoming credentialed through the state or national organization. An addition to every contract will be that each program receiving money will be required to attend 75% of all early childhood meetings.

Pam gave the group an update on the Corner Counties Empowerment Area and Taylor County Empowerment Area merge. In March, Taylor County approved to merge with Corner Counties. The state will no longer allow single county Empowerment areas unless they have a 0-5 population of 5,000+.

The two groups have met jointly, and will look for new board members to fill board positions. With the new name and new geographic location, the board will try to have equal representation from each, and will have to become more gender balanced. Pam said it is always hard to find men willing to serve on the Empowerment board.

Pam handed out an "At a glance – similarities and dissimilarities" paper which graphed out the two Empowerment areas. While most things are similar, there will be some areas that both counties will have to change or create new policies.

Those present reviewed both the CCEA community assessment done a few years ago, as well as the Taylor County assessment. Because of the merger, a new community assessment will have to be done, using the best of both previously used assessments.

It was agreed to keep the color coordination for each county to easily divide the answers received. Other likes and dislikes of the two forms were discussed, as well as additions and questions that could be eliminated from each. Pam hopes the combined community assessment would be ready by July in time for county fairs and other summer activities where the public could access the surveys.

With the merger, there will be three public hearings to talk about the combining of the two early childhood areas. The following schedule will be followed for the public hearings.

Monday, May 17 from 5-6 p.m. at the Page County Courthouse, Page Room, Clarinda

Tuesday, May 18 from 5-6 p.m. at the Fremont County Courthouse, Sidney

Thursday, May 20 from 5-6 p.m. at the Bedford Area Development Center, 601 Madison, Bedford

Pam encouraged all of those present to try and attend one of the public hearings. She will get the information to the press, board members, and other providers not at the meeting.

Joan Gallagher, with Taylor County Public Health, gave a short presentation about a lead coalition she would like to see formed in her four-county area (Taylor, Page, Montgomery and Adams). She updated the group on lead testing requirements for children, how they should have six tests by age 6, beginning at age 1.

Joan asked that the early childhood committee be an outreach vehicle to get this information to families and providers. Renee, Angie, Pam, Lori, Jenny and Linda volunteered to help Joan with the lead coalition in her four-county area. Others said, while they didn't work in Page or Taylor counties, they would be glad to continue the lead awareness in Fremont County.

The preschool exchange group has agreed to include Taylor County providers in their meetings. They will try to meet in Clarinda, making it more centrally located for all three counties. Pam suggested the early childhood committee do the same.

Those attending early childhood agreed to keep the EC meetings every other month, and possibly move to Clarinda for meetings. Pam will get a calendar together for FY11 to keep everyone informed of meeting dates/locations.

The book drive in April went well, with six families attending to get free books. Several providers also took books to be used in their programs. The drive collected nearly 2,000 books, and there were several left over. Pam encouraged those attending, who had not already gotten books, to look through the boxes and take what they liked.

Ideas were given on how to make the book drive better if we do it again. Distribution locations in all three counties might be more successful than one location. Several books were dirty, torn or dated, and Pam said those books were recycled.

Bernie Wagoner asked Pam to inform the group about the Wellmark Grant available for prevention and quality early childhood support and development. There is an August deadline with local matching funds. This might be a good grant for several groups to collaborate on. Julie, Pam and Jeri agreed to help think of ideas to submit. Jenny said Taylor County is already working on its own proposal.

The next meeting of the early childhood committee will be July 6 at 1:30 p.m. at a TBA location in Clarinda.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Lowthorp