



FAMILY ACTION LEARNING TEAM

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 18, 2017

Meeting Participants: Pam, Keayba, Jodi-Ann, Myrica, Melissa

Ready/Ready Staff: Rachael Burrello

Facilitator: Amber Robinson

Guest: Lisa Pettiford

SYSTEMS CHANGE TARGET: Engage families as partners and change agents in the community	
A. Agenda Item: Steering Committee Report-Out	
<p><u>Summary of Discussion</u></p> <p>Rachael presented a report-out from the Ready for School, Ready for Life (Ready/Ready) Steering Committee meeting on Monday, December 11.</p> <p>The Duke Endowment (TDE) shared the Theory of Change developed with Ready/Ready:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready/Ready is partnering with TDE to bring three national programs to Guilford County to create a continuum of care from prenatal to age 3. • Lots of feedback from Family ALT has gone into this effort. • TDE is partnering with Ready/Ready to go after a sizable investment to scale the continuum of care. <p>Schoolhouse Partners shared a market map of early childhood services in Guilford County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The market map shows what revenue is being generated in the early childhood (EC) system and where the money is coming from • The EC market is almost \$200 million. • Education Services is about \$170 million of that. • 75% of Education Services revenue, or almost \$128 million, comes from out-of-pocket tuition payments, and it's growing. • Guilford County spends more on interventions than on prevention services. 	<p><u>Action Items</u></p> <p>FAMILIES: Click here to learn more about The Duke Endowment.</p> <p>FAMILIES: Stay tuned for more information on the Theory of Change and the market map.</p>
B. Agenda Item: Smart Start Conference Planning	
<p><u>Summary of Discussion</u></p> <p>The Smart Start conference is geared toward professionals in the early childhood field; usually the exchange is professionals presenting to professionals. Family voice has been present but rare.</p> <p>Families asked: what would you as a professional want to know from families?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a line of communication between families and teachers is key. • Establishing that initial relationship is hard for families and for teachers, because everyone is so busy. • Taking a little extra time to work on relationships can make a world of difference. 	<p><u>Action Items</u></p> <p>FAMILIES: Stay tuned for more information on the Family ALT Smart Start Conference workshop, and how you can get involved in preparing.</p>

Additional suggestions on areas that could be improved in the early childhood system:

- We can do a better job in Guilford County about providing the same resources across the board, at every school.
- Sharing resources with families, making sure they have the tools they need. Making sure we are providing things that families will actually use.
- Schools use different online communication tools, and they are not always compatible with each other or user-friendly. If families don't have the resources to get online, they miss out.
- Texting families often works better than online communication.
- Increased professionalism among educators.
- Families want clear communication when there is a behavior issue, describing what the issue is and when it is occurring, so they can be effective in addressing it.

Things that families and teachers have seen work well:

- Sending hand-written notes back to the teacher in the child's take-home folder
- Having parent-teacher conferences to check in, not just when there is an issue
- Setting up a "reward" system for children that earns them rewards for positive behaviors, rather than a system that simply tries to correct negative behaviors.
- Having kindergarten orientation events to smooth the transition from pre-K to kindergarten. (A team from Ready/Ready is working to improve the pre-K to K transition process in Guilford County.)
- Changing the conversation with the child so that the first question the family asks when they get home isn't about behavior or discipline. Asking the child about what they did that day, or what they enjoyed, can create a positive experience.
- Educators changing the conversation with families so that they know more about the child's positive behaviors and not just negative behaviors.
- Families opening a dialogue and asking questions when they don't understand a communication or policy from the educator.
- Families offering to volunteer inside and outside of the classroom – stopping by to give a teacher a bathroom break, or helping to prepare folders for the week.
- Educators and families approaching the child's education as a team, focusing on working together to get the best outcomes for the child.

C. Agenda Item: Family ALT Videos

Summary of Discussion

Families discussed their plan for the next video, about how educators and families can have good two-way communication. Families filmed a practice video featuring an educator and a parent discussing a child's classroom behavior. Families reflected on the practice video:

- Both parties avoided becoming defensive, so it did not take long to resolve the issue.
- Using open, relaxed body language helped.
- Educators can ask if anything has changed in the home, because changes have great effects on children.
- Making parents feel comfortable and validating their concerns can make it easier for them to open up.
- Both parties were most concerned about the child, not about creating conflict.
- The family member felt heard.
- Follow-up is important, on both ends.
- Educators and families are working together to build human beings.
- Families respect the profession and are proud to partner with educators.
- Teamwork is essential for success.

Action Items

FAMILIES: Stay tuned for more information on the Family ALT video, and how you can get involved.

Families further reflected on what families and educators could get out of their video:

- For it to be a team, the whole team has to be healthy, teachers need to have their mental health breaks and be rested and fulfilled.
- Across the board, interactions are hard for everybody because we focus on our technology.
- Educators can share with families how they can volunteer in the classroom, and families can be willing to ask how they can help educators out.
- Volunteering in the classroom is a great way to better understand the teacher's perspective and the challenges they face.
- Families and educators need to be on the same page with expectations and discipline so that the child is not confused.

Meetings will be the 3rd Monday of each month at His Glory Child Development Center, 3223 Yanceyville St. Greensboro. Here's the schedule for 2018:

- **Monday, January 22, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, February 19, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, March 19, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, April 16, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, May 21, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, June 18, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, July 16, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **NO MEETING IN AUGUST – Happy back-to-school season!**
- **Monday, September 17, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, October 15, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, November 19, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, December 17, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**

EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE PRIORITIES – GUILFORD COUNTY

1. Ensure all new parents are connected to critical early childhood information and community supports/services.
2. Connect more young children and their families to needed services by embedding coordinated developmental screening and referral processes into settings that provide services for families with young children.
3. Improve family access to needed programs through the creation of an effective referral and coordination network for young children and their families.
4. Leverage and expand early literacy resources/services to meet community need by determining and launching priority program and system changes.
5. Leverage and expand parenting resources/services to meet community need by determining and launching priority program and system changes.
6. Improve school readiness by addressing affordability and accessibility of high-quality child care in Guilford County.
7. Create seamless and easy transition experiences for children and their families by aligning Pre-K and kindergarten priorities, curriculum, and transition processes.
8. Ensure the local early childhood system is responsive to and respectful of family needs and voice.
9. Increase public demand for school readiness by implementing a public awareness campaign focused on building community buy-in about the importance of early learning and development (0-8).
10. Embed continuous improvement orientation within the local early childhood system.

OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Ways to stay involved in Guilford County once your children reach kindergarten:

- Guilford Parent Academy (through Guilford County Schools) -- visit http://www.gcsnc.com/pages/gcsnc/Departments/Guilford_Parent_Academy
- School-based opportunities through PTA and other school focused activities, or to volunteer through GCS.
- [The Say Yes Guilford Pre-K to Grade 5 Task Force](#) has three sub-groups that focus on different parts of the Pre-K to Grade 5 pathway. Talk with Amber, Mary or Rachael to get connected.
 - Kindergarten readiness
 - Reading at grade level by the end of Grade 3
 - High stakes proficiency in ELA and Math by the end of Grade 5
- Ready/Ready Design Teams, to work on designing parts of the system around each of the 10 Key Priorities. These teams will not have age limits, and family voice will be critical to their success.

Additional Details from the Practice Video:

TEACHER: Hi, I hope you're doing well today! I heard you had some concerns and I wanted to make sure we address them.

PARENT: I'm upset because the only time I'm told what my child does is when she's on orange. I don't know what more I can do as a parent, because at home she listens to me. This note says she's interrupting you, but it doesn't really help me because it doesn't say when she's doing it.

TEACHER: I can tell from the way you're talking that you have some concerns, I want to address it as a team.

PARENT: I feel like the first thing out of my mouth when my daughter comes home is, "What color are you on?" She tried to hide this note that you sent home, and that concerns me.

TEACHER: I'm glad you shared. And on my part I need to be giving more insight and descriptives when I send a note, and I haven't been doing that, I apologize for that. Are you able to check her planner? I can put a note in her planner.

PARENT: I can check her planner. I know she's generally good in class, it would be really nice to know when she's doing something good, and not just when there's a behavior issue.

TEACHER: How would you feel about a text message or an email? I can jot down a note and send that to you. We can also bring your daughter in to talk, and let her know she's supported and we want her to be successful. What kind of incentives do you do at home?

PARENT: I don't really have any. Well, with my mom, she would let us watch an extra hour of cartoons, or let us play outside after dark if we got a good report from our teacher.

TEACHER: I noticed that your daughter is very creative and likes drawing, so maybe I can utilize some of those areas. I know sometimes she doesn't raise her hand, but maybe we can let her be a leader in the classroom, like passing out papers.

PARENT: Yes. I didn't want you to feel like as a teacher I'm putting more on you. I know your job is challenging. I appreciate what you're doing with my daughter.

TEACHER: I want you to feel like if you have concerns you can always come in and talk to me. Any time you have concerns you can email or text me, or if you need to write a note in the planner, I'll make sure whatever you want to use, I'll do the same.

PARENT: She may be talking in class because she is not getting the attention at home, her dad deployed recently, and I know she misses him.

TEACHER: Thank you for sharing, I didn't know that, so maybe she can come talk to me and we can draw a picture for her dad when he comes home.

PARENT: That would be wonderful, thank you so much.

TEACHER: Thank you so much for making the time to talk to me, I hope we were able to address your concerns.

PARENT: Yes, thank you, this was so helpful.