



**Butler County Child & Family Development  
Task Force  
October 15, 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 (15 total):** Audra Kenneson, Smart Start; Barb Roths, Butler County Extension; Gayle Shelton, Smart Start/Bright Beginnings; Jamie Jellison, EduCare; Jill Morrow, Bright Beginnings; Jodi Evans, YMCA; Kathy Gann, Children's Mercy; Luann McFadden, Bright Beginnings; Marcy Cone, Child Start; Marla Canfield; ECAAP; Sue Barrientos, BCC Early Childhood Program; Sue Givens, USD 490; Teresa Thompson, BCC Early Childhood Program; Marion Nichols, MidCAP; Stefanie Brand & Bianca Simmons (Guests), Catholic Charities/Marriage for Keeps.

**Introductions & Announcements:**

Audra welcomed the group and everyone introduced themselves.

- Audra passed out Rainbows Readers and pointed out that the inserts are specific for Butler County.
- At the Walnut Valley Festival held recently, EduCare did a large game area for children and reported that they had a good showing. Sue Givens was in the pie toss and had whipped cream pies "tossed" at her.
- Sue Givens reported that the job fair was successful and had 100 potential employees.
- Kathy Gann brought pamphlets to remind us that the transportation benefit through Children's Mercy is still available. It pays 30cents per mile when people who have the vision card go to doctor, dental and WIC appointments and to pick up prescriptions. They also have a door to door service. For more information, contact Kathy at Children's Mercy [kgann@fhp.org](mailto:kgann@fhp.org).
- Teresa from EduCare reported that they have become a site for Prairie Land Foods. They did a small trial group in October and will do a full order in November. Families can buy Prairie Packs (6 pounds of meat and 6 – 8 fresh fruits and vegetables) for \$24.00. They take Vision Card. They can purchase "add-ons." They can place an order for additional food if they want. They can enroll online ([www.prairielandfoods.com](http://www.prairielandfoods.com)) or at EduCare. The food pick up date is always on a Saturday and when families pick up their food, they are asked to show that they volunteer in their communities.

**Guest Presenters:**

- Marion Nichols: Mid Kansas Community Action Program; Community Service & Housing Director – This organization serves 18 counties and is one of 8 CAPs in Kansas. The goal is to help people reach self-sufficiency. In Butler they have HeadStart,

Community Action (generalized case management), Emergency services, Parent Talk (parenting classes), Poverty Education, and Asset Development. Marion provided several pamphlets about different services. She focused her conversation on two areas: Poverty Education and Asset Development. MidCAP can provide Poverty Simulations for any agency that would like one. Each simulation would be appropriate for groups of 45 – 80 people. The participants experience four weeks living in poverty during the one hour simulation. They learn how individuals in poverty pay bills, budget, deal with “Luck of the Draw” situations. The reason for the Asset Development program is based on the statistic that a lower percentage of people in poverty own their own home, have reliable transportation, have savings, have insurance at work, and find it harder to return to school or obtain higher education or technical school training. MidCAP works with families and individuals on asset development through tax filing, budgeting, etc. If anyone is interested in hosting a Poverty Simulation or if you have any questions about MidCAP, contact Marion Nichols at 316.775.3000 ext 103 or [mnichols@mid-capinc.org](mailto:mnichols@mid-capinc.org).

- Stefani Brand & Bianca Simmonds: Catholic Charities; Marriage for Keeps – Marriage for Keeps is a federally funded research program about the impact of marriage harmony on families. It is a no-cost marriage enhancement program where the couple experiences a catered meal (from Outback Steakhouse) and workshop each week of the 12 week program. Child care is not provided. Participating couples are given a \$10 gas card and a \$30 Wal-Mart card each week to offset the cost of fuel and child care. Workshops cover stress & relaxation, communication, finances, etc. There are sixteen couples per class, the class runs for 12 weeks, and a new class starts every month. Couples may receive services for up to a year – they can be assigned to a family support specialist who would work to help the family find resources and support in the community. Qualifications for the program are that the participants are 18 or older, married or common law married, have a child in home at least ½ the time who is under 15 years old, and they must meet income guidelines. Couples who come in for the intake process are given a \$50 gift card for going through intake. ½ of the couples are placed in the control group (will not get the service) and half of the couples are put in the research group (will get the service). If anyone is interested in referring a family to Marriage for Keeps, contact Stefani or Bianca at 316.264.8344 ext. 322 or visit [www.marriageforkeeps-ks.org](http://www.marriageforkeeps-ks.org).

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

Our grant was turned in on time. We are waiting for the report to let us know the outcome. The Foundation of Greater Butler County agreed to sign the documentation to assure the Children’s Cabinet that we would have the funds, but we still will need to raise the 10% cash match.

#### **Update on Legislative Luncheon:**

On October 1, we invited the area legislators (and individuals running for state office) to join us at EduCare for a luncheon. Rainbows United, Smart Start, Kansas Action for Children, Butler Community College, EduCare, and Bright Beginnings participated. State Legislator John Grange attended and spent the two hour time touring the facility and discussing early childhood initiatives. Participants encouraged Mr. Grange to support early childhood initiatives in Kansas.

**Week of the Young Child:**

Week of the Young Child is held in April. Over the last few years, EduCare, El Dorado HeadStart, and El Dorado First Baptist have had an activity to open the week. Other providers were invited to attend with them. For kick off, they went to the Depot and sang and held a balloon launch. Then each agency did the rest of the week's activities by themselves. We discussed using the kick off idea of El Dorado and organizing with the other towns in Butler with a goal of having Andover, Augusta, Rose Hill, and other communities having a balloon launch at the same time on the first day. We could talk with the mayors of each town to have proclamations made. We could work with area art studios to display art of children. Kathy Gann from Children's Mercy stated that her agency would like to work with us, perhaps in the form of offering some funds to help offset the cost. We will keep this "in the parking lot" and start planning in January.

**Meetings and Times:**

Audra has had a few emails from task force members who have been unable to attend. Those individuals have inquired about moving the task force to another day or time. The concern held by the group is that if we move the day/time, we would have others who would be unable to attend. Audra will continue to remind members that we are thrilled to have them every time or every once in a while; and members are also encouraged to send a replacement if they are unable to attend. Task Force minutes will continue to be posted on the website for easy retrieval.

**Next Meeting:** Our next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, November 19, 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 Kathlene Medlin will provide us with information about HeadStart.

*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)*