



**Butler County Child & Family Development  
Task Force  
October 21, 2009**

**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 (20 total):**

Audra Kenneson, Smart Start; Brooke Thomas-Fekken, Smart Start; Darla Carter, Family Life Center Safehouse; Jackie Tanner, Child Start; Jamie Downs, Butler County Health Department; Jamie Jellison, EduCare; Jill Morrow, Bright Beginnings; Kathy Gann, Children's Mercy; Kris Nocholson, KACCRRRA; Luann McFadden, Bright Beginnings; Marla Canfield, ECAAP; Paula Fritschen, AREA; Sue Barrientos; BCC EduCare; Susan Duncan, EduCare; Susan Harsh, Bright Beginnings; Suzi Thien, SCARF; Teresa Thompson, BCC Early Childhood; Guests: Nancy, Ron, & Faye from Spirit of Faith Church.

**Introductions & Announcements:**

Audra welcomed the group.

- Guests: Nancy, Ron & Faye from Spirit of Faith Church – Pastor Mark Wirth recommended they come to speak with us about a project on which they are working. They want to try to help kids who may not have a good Christmas. They are looking for donations (new and used) they will pick up the items. They are also looking for families they can adopt and give the items to. They have talked with the Salvation army and can get names from them. They want to get names of families and kids so they can have a meal and when the family is there give the gifts to them. For more information, contact Ron at 321.3818 or 644.4010.
- Darla – The Safehouse has had 50 Halloween costumes donated. They have some left over from last year. If anyone knows of families who need costumes for the kids, please have them call the Safehouse at 321.7104. They are also starting the Kids Safe program. They received a Mary Kay grant for \$20,000 and will have this after school program one time per week. It is a support group for kids ages 9 through 14; it will start soon.
- Teresa – Prairie Land Food prices will be dropping. They are seeing their lowest participation since they've started – there is a reduction or participation state wide. The Prairie Packs are dropping in prices and will now sell for \$21 instead of \$24. In addition, you no longer have to purchase the Prairie Pack before you buy the other offerings on the menu. Volunteerism is still attached. In November, the Holiday Pack will have some nice offerings with a good variety. Teresa will mail the November menu to Audra when it is released next week, and Audra will forward it to the group. All income brackets are encouraged to participate.

- Marla – EduCare had a completer in the apprenticeship program! Debbie Hayes now has her apprenticeship certificate. That makes a total of 3 people at EduCare who now have that certificate and they can now be mentors to the next group of apprentices. For more information on the Apprenticeship program, Marla can be reached at [mcanfield@kansascommerce.com](mailto:mcanfield@kansascommerce.com)
- EduCare – They are getting ready for their KQRS visit!
- Kathy – Children’s Mercy had a booth at the State Fair and learned via a survey that 88% of the families are on a social networking site: Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc. Children’s Mercy will begin utilizing social networking sites to get information out to families. On October 16, 2010 in Wichita, Children’s Mercy will be one of the hosts of a community wide baby shower. This activity has been going on in Kansas City for a long time, and they are excited to bring the opportunity to Wichita. They will target new and expecting mothers and will provide classes, information, and prizes. Vendors (not for profit) will be able to sign up to be at the event. Anyone interesting in attending the planning meetings can join in – Next meeting is November 16 at 11:30 at the Extension office (bring your lunch). For more information, Kathy can be reached at [kgann@fhp.org](mailto:kgann@fhp.org)
- Jackie – All sites will be rated by December except for First Baptist, who will be rated after the first of the year. Growing With Children conference will be on march 6.
- Susan – Rainbows recently had their 10:15 celebration – where employees who have been with the agency for 10 years or more celebrate their time with Rainbows. The day is paid for by Board Members. This year, there are 73 people in the 10:15 club.
- Brooke and Audra – Free provider trainings are coming up, hosted by Smart Start. This coming Saturday, October 24, Jennifer Francois will be in El Dorado providing training about literacy in early childhood. On November 14 in an all day EXTRAVAGANZA, five hours of free training will be offered. Audra will have a 3 hour session on mandated reporting in the morning, and Brooke will have a 2 hour session on Positive Behavior Supports in the afternoon. For more information, please contact Audra at [akenneson@rui.org](mailto:akenneson@rui.org).
- Teresa – At the KAEYC conference, the student group prepared a presentation on how to start a new group on campus. The group that had wanted to attend the session had to leave early due to weather. The student group used that time to have an executive meeting. They have made great strides to be an active group and continue to work hard to get the word out about the work they do. KAEYC website will soon reflect the student involvement portion of KAEYC – as raising new leaders is an important part of our future. Several EduCare teachers taught sessions at the KAEYC conference.

**Guest Presenters:**

- Jodi Evans – YMCA Andover: Jodi was unable to attend today’s meeting. She will present early in 2010.

- Suzi Thien – Sunlight Children’s Advocacy and Rights Foundation: Suzie is the Executive director of Sunlight Children’s Advocacy and Rights Foundation which is an umbrella organization that has a vision of having three buildings/major services for the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (Butler, Greenwood, and Elk Counties). The first part of that vision is the Children’s Advocacy Center – which is open and seeing children. They have strict guidelines to follow and are currently getting accredited. They opened on March 7, 2007. From March to December 2007, they saw 63 children. During the 2008 year, they saw 119 children. In 2009, from January to yesterday (October 20) they have seen 110 children. The second component of the vision is to have a Children’s Home in Butler County. They are working on a needs assessment and have asked successful agencies (like the Wichita Children’s Home) for advice along the way. The third component is to have a Visitaiton and exchange center. They have several avenues for fund raising: the Buckagroom Ball, Grants (federal, state, local), Local Municipalities, Businesses, and Private donations. For more information, contact Suzi Thien, Executive Director, at 313.4107 or [suzi.thien@sunlight.kscoxmail.com](mailto:suzi.thien@sunlight.kscoxmail.com)
- Paula Fritschen – Alliance to Recognize and End Abuse: AREA began in 2004 and grew out of a ministry at the First United Methodist Church that was for adult survivors of abuse. AREA works across the state to advocate for survivors of abuse and children who are abused. Their mission is “To help recognize and end abuse and its long term consequences for the human family by focusing on these dimensions of abuse: spiritual, emotional/psychological, sexual, physical/medical, legal, and societal.” They seek to change the state of limitations to enable survivors to pursue legal remedies for the devastating lifelong effects that occur from child abuse. They have a speakers’ Bureau and are willing to go to different groups to tell their message. They have a need for stories of survivors of abuse, and would keep confidentiality if we can refer people to them. For more information contact Paula at [area.ks@cox.net](mailto:area.ks@cox.net).

**Smart Start Grant Information:**

We have seen a reduction in the amount of new licensed child care homes in Butler County during 2009. As a result, we have not been able to provide the number of Start-Up Grants that we had set for a goal (5). Jamie reported that in 2009, the Health Department received approximately ½ the number of inquiries as they have in years past, and approximately 75% fewer licenses were given this year. Of those that were “newly licensed” this year, many were people who had been working but moved their home, so they had to get “new” licenses.

Child care providers across the county are reporting low numbers of enrollment. Two of the larger centers have reported closing rooms because of low enrollment. Due to the closing of some classrooms, the number of rooms receiving KQRS has fallen below the number of classes we have identified to serve.

The Children’s Cabinet will be releasing the Request For Proposal (RFP) for the 2010 Smart Start Grant to us soon. Rainbows will continue as our fiscal agent. Audra reported to the group that she had heard from several community members that they believed Rainbows should continue in that role.

The Block Grant is currently being worked on and we will be asking for the same funding again for 2010. The United Way of the Plains has been identified as the fiscal agent for that grant.

### **A Look at the New Year:**

Audra asked the group if they have liked the way the meetings have been going and how the meetings have been scheduled. Prior to Audra being with Smart Start, the meetings were held every other month. Does the group wish to go to that schedule? Those in attendance agreed that we should schedule the meeting for each month and if we had to cancel it, Audra would notify the group. It was agreed that the format of the last year was appreciated by those in attendance – guest speakers to present new information to us and also agency updates. Audra will work on a calendar for 2010 and will be asking the task force members to please help again in locating speakers for the meetings.

### **Other**

There was no other business to discuss.

**Next Meeting:** Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 18 from 11 am – 1 pm Bradford Memorial Library in El Dorado. Please bring your own lunch. Guest presenters will be Barb Roth of Butler County Extension and Susan Gardner of Bethlehem House.

*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)*

Minutes written by Audra Kenneson, LMSW  
October 21, 2009