

Bilingual Advisory Council  
Early Childhood Sub-Committee  
Northeastern Illinois University, Room 2056, Classroom Building  
August 5, 2005

Members Present: Dr. Rachel Adeodu, Dr. Maria Korkatsch, Harriette Herrera and Kay Henderson, ISBE, Early Childhood Division Administrator.

The meeting was called to order and the minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

Harriette shared articles for members to review. One, entitled Class and the Classroom is of particular interest because of our concern regarding the "readiness" of young children entering school and how uneven the playing field is when they come from homes where the parents education level is limited. The article can be downloaded on the following site:  
<http://www.asbj.com/current/controversy.html>

The members decided to move to new business and put our assignment for the next session.

Kay Henderson, ISBE Division Administrator for Early Childhood, was able to join us. Ms. Henderson gave the subcommittee an update on the current happenings in the field and participated in a discussion about the need to certify large numbers of bilingual early childhood educators.

The following is a summary of the conversation with Kay.

Illinois has moved well ahead many states in the area of early childhood education. We have received the biggest increase in funding of any other state in the union; a nine million dollar increase.

Illinois has Early Learning Standards in place. ISBE has been attentive to the criteria for eligibility into the State Early Childhood programs.

Chicago SD 299 gets 37% of the comprehensive grant money; the remaining funds are distributed throughout the state. Kay went with Board president, Jesse Ruiz to many communities to share the news about new funds coming into early childhood programs and they got a wonderful response with their announcement. Cicero has a partnership with the park district to house a program. The idea is to use childcare centers, schools and churches for sites and partnerships so services can be expanded.

In Early Childhood Parental Training, family care staff goes in to home daycare providers. The majority of child care is provided here. Care providers are trained here.

They provide the programs called “Parents as Teachers” and “Homecare Providers” and give materials that caretakers can use to improve the quality of the stimulation and support they give to the children in their charge. Participants learn about outcomes teaching to outcomes as delineated in the IL. Early Learning Standards.

Dr Adeodu asked about Virtual pre-K. Kay said they have a video and materials to offer caretakers. The programs that ISBE promotes include looking at the child’s health and developmental assessment, while measuring growth and development. What is extremely crucial is providing services to the group from 0 through 3 years old.

We have programs called Healthy Families and Baby Talk. Programs that we want to promote have many of the components of Early Head Start including home visits, modeling and teaching parents and caretakers to support healthy and appropriate cognitive, linguistic, physical and social/emotional development. The message we all need to promote and encourage is the crucial role parents play in their children’s overall development through the ways they work and interact with their children

The Illinois Early Childhood statute requires that 11% of the funds go to the birth through three-year old children.

We have blazed the trail in the context of focusing on the family and trying to involve parents in the classrooms. However, we have not been able to get into the homes of our children due to a variety of reasons.

Peoria has built a beautiful Early Childhood, (EC) Center; it houses the head start and State Pre-K at risk programs. It is a model for other communities to consider. There is a workroom, library, professional development for staff, and a close working relationship with the St. Francis Medical Center to meet all of the children’s needs in one centralized location. Parents sign a contract in order to participate and receive services.

How will we evaluate the “parents as teachers program”? The State has kept longitudinal studies on the children. We will now be reporting using the models that have been used in the research and evaluating the findings from this research.

The committee then moved the discussion to the topic of certification. Members agreed to visit the certification issues surrounding the Type 04 certificate and the bilingual piece. A brainstorming of ideas ensued. The ideas that were shared are recorded here for consideration and further investigation.

It should also be noted that many of the issues are similar to the ones teachers working in daycare centers face. There are not enough certificated four-year college teachers who are bilingual/bicultural to staff programs where the children attend.

One of the major directions would be the creation of a seamless transition for higher education students to take from the community college where they receive their associate degrees to a university program, which would give them the specialization, methodology and clinical requirements necessary to become a certified early childhood teacher. In Decatur there is such a relationship with Richland Community College and Milliken University.

The discussion addressed the need to look at teachers with a Type 29 certificate who were early childhood teachers in their home countries and explore the creation of certain parameters which would allow them to work as EC teachers but could require concurrent university level coursework to be taken which would ultimately fulfill the requirements for a Type 04 certificate.

A discussion about the limited means of many teachers in this group led us to discuss the need for funding scholarships so we could offer these kinds of programs to people who would love to further their education but do not have the means to do so even though they are working.

At Northeastern Illinois, the Focus Program has for people with a Type 03 or Type 09 to obtain different certificates. We are hopeful that we can find some kind of funding for an early childhood bilingual teacher preparation program such as the one Northeastern had previously had under Title VII.

Our Northeastern faculty members would look into possible funding sources. The group also discussed the need to develop a position statement from this sub-committee outlining services to support the needs of Latino young children, who as a group are inordinately underserved and less likely to receive any kind of early childhood program.

The group did not set a date for the next meeting because too many of our regular members were unable to attend. Harriette Herrera will contact members in October to set the next meeting date. Drs. Korkatsch and Adeodu offered to provide space at northeastern Illinois University for the next meeting.