



**Stratford School Readiness and Child Care Council  
Minutes – November 17, 2009**

**Members present:** Lynnette Baroni, La Sandra Boyd, Melissa Daskam, Michael Faye, Lynn Goetz, Sue Gottlieb, Sally Head, Shamain Johnson, Rob Landis, Mary Tiernan, Tammy Trojanowski, Myra Watnick, Katie Yanzo

**Member absent:** Nell Barrett, Trina Carr, Priscilla Choquette, Melanie Gerogalas, Kathy Giordano, Christina Kazanas, Priscilla Long, Ellen Michaels, Pat Naylor, Abel Padro, Greta Roberts, Elaine Watson, Alice Williams.

**Discovery Liaison:** Sonja Ahuja

**I. Welcome & Announcements**

Co-Chair Sue Gottlieb called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. She announced that Co-Chair Alix Semancik has resigned from the SRACCAC. Lynn Goetz will represent Helen King Reynolds School. In addition, Pat Naylor and Elaine Watson had a conflict with a Stratford Public Schools meeting, and Priscilla Long was assisting her daughter with her new baby.

**II. Presentation & Discussion: What's New in Birth to Three Services with Myra Watnick, SRACCAC Member and Director of Rehabilitation Associates, Inc.**

Myra reported that Birth to Three fees for services are increasing by 60% as of January 1, 2010. Although there is a federal mandate to evaluate the child and provide service coordination for free, ongoing services are fee-based. Myra expressed concern that families who would benefit may drop out of Birth to Three with the increased fees. She added that Birth to Three has documented success. Approximately 40% of Birth to Three children do not need special education services when they reach school. An important strength of Birth to Three is training parents to work with their children.

Myra also reported that insurance companies are required to pay for therapies for children up to age 15 on the autism spectrum. These payments will come out of the families' insurance cap.

**III. Partner Updates**

**Stratford Public Schools:** On Monday, November 16, 2009, the Stratford Board of Education convened a meeting to discuss their five-year strategic plan. The plan is also posted on their website. It was noted that the plan included many references to early intervention as well as discussed parent education. Several organizations raised concerns that they were not specifically named in the plan. However, planning committee members noted that this was a summary and the partners are embedded in the plan. The plan will be approved at the November 23, 2009 meeting. It is a living document and comments and recommendations are welcome. People interested in providing feedback or participating on an action team should contact the Superintendent.

**Stratford Library Association:** Between November 20 to 25, 2009, the Stratford Library is holding a fundraiser in cooperation with Barnes & Noble of Milford. By presenting a voucher, a percentage of the purchase will support the Stratford Library Children's Department. A Book Fair is planned for November 20, 2009. Additional information is online at [www.stratfordlibrary.org](http://www.stratfordlibrary.org).

**South End Community Center:** The Center is conducting their annual coat drive, which distributes coats to those in need. The food pantry is well utilized and welcomes donations.

**Stratford Community Services:** In October, in cooperation with the Stratford Police Department and RYASAP, a Juvenile Review Board began taking referrals and diverting youth from the juvenile justice system. In addition, Community Services is accepting energy assistance applications.

#### **IV. School Readiness Grant Report**

**a. Nominating Committee:** Co-Chair Sue Gottlieb will be reconvening the Nominating Committee to fill the vacant Co-Chair position. Pat Naylor has resigned from the Nominating Committee, leaving LaSandra Boyd and Melissa Daskam. Sue will appoint the third member.

**b. By-Laws Revision:** Abel Padro was not present to report on this committee. In a previous discussion with Sue Gottlieb, Abel suggested that the appointment of Co-chairs be staggered to avoid having two new co-chairs at the same time. It was also suggested that ex-officio members might remain members of the SRACCAC. This committee will also explore the concept of standing committees.

#### **c. Discovery Grant Report**

Sonja Ahuja reminded the SRACCAC that the Graustein Memorial Fund grant has been offered for the past eight years; with the initial period ending this year. The first quarter of 2010 is a time of transition with new grants being funding for 2010 to 2014. There are three ways for communities to participate:

Level 1: For communities with a completed plan and ready for implementation

Level 2: For communities with a beginning plan that is not finished, but could be completed in 2 years

Level 3: For communities without an interest in a plan, but focused on a program or activity strategy.

Stratford seems in closest alignment with Level 2, continuing to refine the plan and taking a deeper look at the indicators and strategies. The deadline for the Request For Proposals (RFPs) has not been released, but expected in the coming weeks.

#### **V. Stratford's Promise to Young Children**

**a. Status of Plan:** The plan is currently being edited. The next meeting is Monday, November 30, 2009 at 12:00 to 1:30. The group has focused on Ready to Learn – Birth to Three, Pre K and K to 3. Elaine Watson is unable to continue to attend meetings, but will assist as the point person as needed.

**b. Next Steps:** Once the plan is in place, implementation will begin. It is a living document, which will allow for deletions and additions.

**VI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m. **The next Executive Steering Committee meeting is Friday, December 4, 2009 from 12:00 to 2:30 p.m. in Room 110 at the Birdseye Municipal Complex. The next meeting of the full Council is scheduled for January 19, 2009.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Trojanowski