

Report from Provider Forum in L.A. March 20, 2010

The meeting was good but not as informative as I would have liked. They split us up into 3 groups (English, Chinese and Spanish speaking groups). We were given 4 topics to choose from and could only pick 3 to discuss. We didn't discuss them per say, we gave our opinions and moved on to the next. The English speaking group that I was in chose Ratios and Groups Size, Provider Training and Qualifications, and Environment Rating. Below is what we wanted to see happen and why:

Ratios and Group Size

1. Title 22 ratios to stay in place as they are and the same for all tiers.
 - a. Hiring a 3rd person is a financial burden for most of us.
 - b. The home structure may not be large enough to bring in another adult.
 - c. Title 22 standards have worked this long and are just fine.
 - d. We are not preschools and should not be compared to them.
 - e. It should be parental choice on the type of care that they want.
 - f. Other states with the QRS already use similar ratios as our current title 22.

Provider Training and Qualifications

1. Grandfather in the providers that have been doing child care for years.
2. Make workshops count toward provider training as well as college credits.
3. A 5 yr phase in to be in effect once this becomes implemented.
4. Financial help for those that want to be a higher tier so they can hire substitutes and get mentoring while they work toward their training requirements.
5. Transferrable credentials. (Those that hold degrees in other areas.)
6. Instead of a B.A. we would like to see just E.C.E. courses be required for the higher tiers.
7. Tier 5 provider to get the same state compensations as centers do, especially if they have a B.A.
8. A separate scale for Family Home Child Care Providers and Centers.
9. Ask for our Resource and Referrals to hold workshops that will count toward our professional training.
10. Make different ways to achieve the higher tier than just a B.A.
 - a. Professional Training
 - b. A higher Environment Rating should count for something
 - c. Experience
 - d. Transferrable permit program
 - e. Accreditation

Other points that were brought up during this discussion were:

- There will be a system put into place to demonstrate competency but experience alone will not be acceptable. (This system has not yet been defined.)

- They may implement the Gateway Program; training for providers.
- There was concern about Exempt Providers not having to meet the same standards as providers. They said there would be support to get licensed for those that want to but there is no requirement for them to meet these standards.
- If we require our assistants to have E.C.E. units then we would not be able to afford them as they would require to be paid what they could make in a center/preschool.

Environment Rating

1. Have child care raters be experienced in family home child care.
2. Unique programs to meet the needs of children and parental choices; we are unique to centers.
3. When we are expected to rise to the center standards, we lose our family home environment that makes us unique.
4. Provider to rate herself and parental rating needs to be included.
5. Streamline the evaluation process to work together. (FCCERS, Accreditation, etc.)
6. Streamline California. Make all of the above available to all counties. (Kern County was there and they don't have FCCRS or Accreditation available that she knows of.)
7. Provide support services to the providers, especially those that provide care after hours and have less time for school.
8. Financial compensation to reach each tier level.
9. The organization that rates/evaluates should not be the payer of such compensation. Conflict of interest.
10. Model pilot programs to test QRS before it is rolled out to everyone.

Final recommendations to be sent to the Advisory Committees

At the end of the 3 group break out, we got back together and the person in charge asked each language group to say what they wanted for each topic. Then they picked and chose what they were going to take from this and send to the Advisory Committees to take into consideration. The following are what they chose to take back (out of all the points we brought up, this is it).

1. Stick to title 22 ratios across the board.
2. Count experience, special training and workshops toward qualifications.
3. Also count a quality environment toward the qualifications.
4. Assistants to be defined as someone that is old enough to be left alone with the children in care (over 18).
5. Assistants to have title 22 training for tier 1, some units for tier 2, more for tier 3 and so on... (This was not unanimous and we were never asked who was against this, just who was "for". Our group personally believed that assistants should not be required to have special training aside from the title 22 requirements (CPR, First Aid, Health and Safety).)
6. Flexibility in choosing which options and activities for Parent Involvement in each tier.
7. Number of parent involvement options to be the same for all tiers.
8. Environment rating scales to be for family home child care providers and not centers.

9. This one was tore down off the front before I could run up and write it down but it was something about reimbursement.

The main thing to remember is that I was told that the Advisory Committees know that CA is in a sad state right now and that we have no funds to support this system. Their goal is to get the details ironed out and ready for when we do have the funds. Who knows when this will be and in my personal opinion, if they ever will. The meeting was handled very carefully and they asked questions in just the right manner so that they didn't have to answer any of our questions. I was given a way to find an email address to send questions and I will do this as soon as I have a moment. When the questions are answered they will be posted on the OCCCA website.

Thank you,
Kelli Sablow

OCCCA Public Policy