

**Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan
Child Development Partnership Group Meeting
January 12, 2010
Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Cheryl Cook, The Resource Exchange
- Leanne Cabral, Child Care Connections
- Steven Hanchett, Fort Carson CYSS
- Jackie Harriman, DoD State Liaison Office
- Kate Hatten, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG)
- Deana Hunt, Child Care Connections
- Charlotte Nal, Community Partnership for Child Development
- Diane Price, Child Nursery Centers
- Mary Sullivan, Child Care Connections
- Rachel Thompson, BBC Research and Consulting (BBC)
- JoAnn Trujillo, Children First
- Cathy Wallace, Child Care Connections
- Sarah White, PPACG

Phase 2 Status/Update

Kate Hatten provided a brief overview of the Phase 2 process and next steps, noting that, for the most part, BBC Research & Consulting and PPACG have completed the research for Phase 2, with some data collection and updates still pending. The next steps are for BBC and PPACG to refine the demographic model and analysis and for the various partnership groups to review the Phase 2 analysis results and draft reports, as well as develop recommendations based on the findings.

Rachel Thompson reviewed the most recent draft of the Child Development section (attached). The three components of the report include a needs assessment (projected demand versus capacity); an economic impact analysis of child care in the Fort Carson region; and an assessment of child advocacy and parent support services. It was noted that the child advocacy/parent support component was originally part of the social services section, but, because the issues/providers generally fit better in the child development section, it is now included as part of the child development report. There is some overlap across many of the issue areas being addressed in Phase 2, and those areas of overlap and final location of background and recommendations is still being determined.

The needs assessment component includes a literature review of the importance of early childhood education and provides an analysis of demand versus capacity for infant/toddler care, preschool and school age care. Key assumptions include the premise that Fort Carson families will choose on-post facilities first, then seek off-post care if there is no space available on-post. It was noted that more information is needed on the

timing of new Fort Carson child development centers (CDCs), because if those spaces are not available when the greatest demand occurs, additional pressures will be placed on off-post providers, particularly for infant care. Other issues that need to be addressed include the ability of providers to find qualified staff and challenges in dealing with emotional/behavioral issues of military children.

The economic impact analysis includes both direct and indirect impacts of child care. The analysis indicates that the overall economic impact of child care in the Fort Carson region is approximately \$414 million. Child care economic impact specific to Fort Carson households is approximately \$32 million.

The child advocacy and parent support services component identifies key entities (both on Fort Carson and off-post) and the services they provide. This component is still missing key providers that will be added in the next draft. While additional information on utilization of Fort Carson services is still needed, the overall assessment is that Fort Carson growth will have moderate impacts on these services, particularly because most providers are currently at or near capacity; Army populations tend to utilize services in greater proportion than the general population; and some organizations, notably The Resource Exchange, currently serve larger numbers than for which there is available funding.

Key findings include certain gaps in supply and demand (i.e., infant care); provider training needs for special needs children and behavioral health issues; the need for improved communication and coordination between the post and off-post providers; potential workforce opportunities of military spouses to fill needs for service providers (such as speech pathologists, occupational therapists, etc.); the need for expanded crisis/respice care; and lack of funding to meet needs.

Attendees noted that the increase in children projected in the draft is on-target, based on the increased referral calls received in 2009. It was also noted that not all families select on-post facilities as a first choice. Additionally, before school care is posing challenges, particularly because of the need for early (i.e. 5:30am) care. It was also noted that there may be greater short-term gaps if the Fort Carson CDCs are not completed when needed. Therefore, the challenge will be to find off-post capacity in the short-term that may not be needed in the long-term once the CDCs are fully operational. It was also noted that infant care is a critical concern now and will only get worse. It was suggested that recommendations should, in addition to capacity issues, address the need for qualified staffing and assistance with behavioral/emotional health.

In terms of formatting, the child advocacy and parent support section is presented differently (with an assignment of “moderate” impact to the region) than the needs assessment. How to categorize the various impacts across sections of the report should be resolved before the report is finalized.

Other Business

Jackie Harriman noted that state legislation is being proposed to provide incentives for off-post child care providers to meet DoD standards; she also noted that DoD can help with training to meet standards.

Charlotte Nal asked for input/assistance regarding National Guard requests for child care services particularly for family trainings during weekends. These types of special requests are challenging often because they are last-minute and require providers to go to the training sites or hotels where families are staying during the trainings. Numerous liability concerns were raised, and Ms. Nal noted that these issues have been handled in the past; Child Care Connections and Children First suggested that the National Guard provide information/ads that can be placed in their newsletters to notify providers who may be interested in assisting.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

The next Child Development Partnership Group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 9 February at 10:30am. An updated draft of the report will be provided prior to the meeting for review. The February meeting will also include a discussion of recommendations based on the report findings and updated capacity analysis.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50am.