



Norwich Children First Initiative

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COLLABORATORS:

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Council for
Community Action
Early Care and
Education

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Norwich Children First Initiative / Norwich School Readiness Council

Meeting Minutes for
January 19, 2005

Mission Statement

The mission of the Norwich Children First Initiative is to engage our families, schools, and community to improve life outcomes for young children.

The Children First Initiative/School Readiness Council Collaborative is an effort to create an early care and education agenda that fully engages parents, schools, and the community.

Attendees: Peter Schultheis, Debbie Poirier, Kerri Griffin, Beverly Goulet, Kim Gumbs, Deb Kievits, Laura Olenick, Keith Ripley, Duncan Profitt, Jackie Jamrock, Lisa Wojtkiewicz, Sandra Gabels and Sherry Filiatreault

Debbie Kievits: Was honored by the Norwich chapter of the NAACP with the Robertsine Duncan Memorial Award at its annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. luncheon. Plus the Mentoring Program SPROUTS was recognized by the City Council of part of National Mentoring Month.

School Readiness: Several policies were handed out for approval at this meeting: Policy #0304-4, #0304-11, #0304-2. Jackie Jamrock motioned that policies #0304-2 and #0304-11 be accepted as is. Debbie Poirier seconded the motion. Beverly Goulet motioned for a discussion on policy #0304-4, and Duncan Profitt seconded it. The question was to clear up eligibility requirement(s) before the next meeting, and to clear up DSS' role in eligibility so that policy #0304-4 can be accepted.

Policies #0304-9, #0304-16, #0304-13, #0304, and #0304-3 need to be read and approved at the next meeting.

Keith Ripley: Is asking people to go the New London County Education Fund web site - <http://members.aol.com/norwichnet> and sign up in support of proposed S.B. No. 217. This is an act concerning the payment of excess impact grants from gaming revenues that was referred to the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Committee on Education. The act would provide increased funding to towns that document the number of children of persons employed by casinos who

qualify under established criteria for special education or English as a second language programs.

Keith also is urging people to sign up on the *Ready, Set, Grow* web site and become a friend of Connecticut children. When you sign up they will not contact you unless you check the box to receive their mailings. The web site is: www.readsetgrowctkids.org.

Recruitment Committee: We had planned a parent meeting for February but it has been moved to March due to inclement weather and many parents' inability to attend. This meeting will be used to get the "pulse" of the community – parents' issues and experiences. This will allow us to let the community know who we are and what we do.

We will also be setting up a meeting to talk to area businesses. We will be seeking their support in the future and letting them know about our program, and how we can work together as a community to help the children. We will also determine the best way to communicate our latest happenings to them in a timely manner.

If you'd like to be on this committee please call Sherry at 823-3782.

Leadership Team: *Voices for Families* classes began at Teachers Memorial School on January 28th (a week late due to weather). 18 people are taking the class, which promises to be a great year.

PEP should be starting in March at TVCCA head start program. PEP will start at the Family Resource Center as soon as we hear from the Parent Trust Funds.

Health and Learn: A consulting team that has experience/disciplines in early care and education is being developed. Three childcare centers (one from Norwich, New London and Groton respectively) will be selected as pilot sites to help with nutrition. A toolbox may be developed for the centers to help parents with nutrition. Norwich will need to identify a site soon.

Childcare Providers: Lisa Wojtkiewicz from the Norwich Municipal Childcare center informed us that the center has been open for one year; enrollment is 32 children (mostly part-time) up to the age of seven. They are working with Mahan School regarding before and after school programs. They serve breakfast and a full lunch. Lisa spoke on the hardship of grandparents raising grandchildren, which may lead to a presentation on this topic.

Anne Krodel: is organizing training on Childhood Literacy skills for Thursday, March 24th.

Three Rivers and Mitchell College have arranged that the Associates Degree credits can be transferred without a problem so students can work towards their BA degrees.

Deb Z: has funding to do a presentation on SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Peter will receive more information as it becomes available.

Med. training: went well

Newsletter: Always looking for articles - please send to Sherry

Strategic Community Plan for the three towns (Norwich, New London, and Groton) – Met on February 12, 2005 at the Norwich Fire Department, and had a discussion on how to involve United Way in our efforts. Lisa Cooney discussed New London's latest: advertisements on mailboxes and buses, PSA on the radio and soon a website will be up and running. They have offered \$1,500.00 for Norwich to develop a website. If you'd like to help design it, please contact Sherry. They will also be running some programs at the Garde Arts Theater. We went over the work plan to see if it is still useful. We have set our meetings for the second Monday of each month. The next meeting is February 9th in Groton.

Kinship Funds: If you know a grandparent or relative guardian that needs money to purchase a special item for a child they are caring for, call Janice Thompson at 823-3782 for more information.

Financial: Everything looks good! \$2000.00 will be rolled over for next year. The new agreements have come out and will be signed along with the new proposal work plan for the year.

Work Plan: The next meeting will be used to work on the grant for GMF. We need your input.

*Next meeting is at the Dime Bank at 9:00 on February 16th 2005
Hope to see you there!*

