

Unlicensed Care Public Forum
December 1, 2007
Notes

9:05 Welcome and role call with number of participants for each site:

ESD 101, Spokane, participants; 6
ESD 105, Yakima, participants; 6
ESD 112, Vancouver, participants;
ESD 113, Olympia, participants; 13
ESD 114, Bremerton, participants; 0
ESD 121, Renton, participants; 3
ESD 123, Pasco, participants; 8
ESD 171, Wenatchee, participants; 0
ESD 189, Anacortes, participants; 0

9:10 Welcome

Lisa La Rue, DEL Licensing Program Administrator

- Thank participants for taking time to be here.
- Stated this is an opportunity for DEL to hear communities' concerns and solutions to unlicensed child care.
- Work collaboratively to ensure the safety and well-being of Washington's children is a top priority
- In addition to safety, to ensure children are prepared for school.
- DEL is aware of unlicensed care in WA and has heard concerns loud and clear.
- DEL is committed to collaborating and truly hearing frustrations and concerns, but also solutions
- Asked participants to keep comments and discussions within that context to maximize the very limited time and ensure a productive, solution-focused forum
- Reviewed ground rules for forum

9:05 Collaborative Goals

Lisa La Rue

- Charge – 3-5 point plan to address unlicensed care in Washington.
 - Explained forum process of information sharing, discussion, and question and answers. Reminded participants that at this time DEL does not have the funds for additional budgetary or FTE implications.
 - Stated that through this discussion of not only frustrations but also solutions, combined ideas can produce action steps to decrease unlicensed care within our own communities and Washington.
 - Review the laws and regulations and role of DEL regarding unlicensed care.

- Reminded the group that the forum was not intended to debate the current RCW/WAC, but rather work within those parameters to come up with solutions.

9:25 Overview of Laws and Regulations

Bob McLellan, Northwest Service Area Manager

Referred to handout and explained:

- RCW
- WAC

9:40 Role of DEL when addressing unlicensed care

Karri Livingston, Eastern Service Area Manager

Referred to handout and explained DEL's role and practice:

- Outlined actions that are currently taken
- Outlined boundaries, i.e. – stay within the law, what is realistic given boundaries

9:45 Local site discussion regarding unlicensed care, facilitator from each service area

- Addressed key questions from registration submission. Each site engaged in a facilitated discussion, and then reported out to the statewide group their group's top frustration and solution. (2 minutes each)

10:00 Local group reports – 2 minutes each site

- ESD 101 - Spokane – Licensing Supervisor Alice Anderson
 - They are concerned with the disconnect with law enforcement
 - Solution - observation during investigation, person or monitoring device
 - Concerned that there is no new funding
 - Solution, making people aware of the benefits of licensed care by continuous PSA
 - They feel there is too much focus on licensed facilities instead of focusing on unlicensed homes
 - They are concerned about programs in gyms, and malls -- exempt care they feel they should not be exempt. They feel that only families should be exempt and they should be closely monitored.
 - Advertising would increase public awareness
- ESD 105 - Yakima - Karri Livingston
 - Provide information and education to parents
 - Saturate the media with information on childcare, including TV, radio, newspaper, specific to audience, internet, flyers posters, doctor/dentists offices, laundry mats, schools, PTA and places where families are
 - Engage child care resource and referral (R&R)
 - Better system of collecting civil penalties – currently it is difficult to collect with little follow through
- ESD 114 – Bremerton – Licensing Supervisor Lzady Culver
 - Stronger statement/viewpoint from DEL/ R&R re: unlicensed care
 - PSA stronger campaign so that parent know the benefits
 - Background check

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- Tax credit for providing licensed care
 - ESD 171 - Wenatchee- Licensing Supervisor Mernie Weick
 - ESD 123 - Pasco – Licensing Supervisor Debbie O'Neil
 - Accountability when providing care for relatives, it should be documented that they are related, and the relationship
 - Restricting advertisement of unlicensed care
 - Commercials – empowering parents – sending out packets of information
 - ESD 121 - Renton- Bob McLellan
 - Public will needs to change – empower parents with information, geared towards different populations: homeless, no technology, language barriers, ensure that all populations are aware of benefits to licensed care.
 - Get unlicensed care providers referred to R&R to learn the benefits
 - Accessibility and affordability of licensed care
 - Increase in subsidy rates – bring rates up to encourage providers to be licensed and increase licensed accessibility
 - ESD 113 – Olympia – Southwest Service Area Manager Joshua Verville
 - Health care
 - Information sharing – PSA to hospitals, etc.
 - Resources – supporting licensed providers, by providing and encouraging them to assist and become mentors to new providers
 - Funding for recruitment and retention – support for providers, mentors, clinic, etc.
 - Provide incentive to become licensed
 - ESD 112 - Vancouver – Licensing Supervisor Darcy Taylor
 - It is illegal to provide unlicensed care -- this should be enforced
 - AGG letter could be sent to unlicensed providers and to inform the media of the legal ramifications
 - Task force to identify unlicensed homes
 - Laws enforcement involved in prosecuting unlicensed homes
- 10:20 Statewide group discussion regarding unlicensed care
Joshua Verville
- Summarized all of the solutions, ideas, and what was discussed and heard
 - After each site reported out for each area, the statewide group discussed the top solutions for each site
 - Each site took 2 minutes to discuss list and selected their top recommendation from the statewide list
 - Prioritize the most effective ways to address this issue
- ESD 101 - Spokane - Alice Anderson
 - Prove that they are relatives during the complaint phase of unlicensed care
 - ESD 105 - Yakima - Karri Livingston

- Recruitment and retention to help exiting providers
- ESD 114 – Bremerton - Lzady Culver
 - Communication plan – doctor offices, public health nurse, etc.
- ESD 123 - Pasco - Debbie O'Neil
 - Media – communication plan
- ESD 121 - Renton- Bob McLellan
 - Educating everyone about licensed care with clear language to define and show the difference to unlicensed/illegal care
- ESD 113 –Olympia, Joshua Verville
 - Enhanced communication – outreach – both local and state
- ESD 112 - Vancouver - Darcy Taylor
 - Contact from the AAG's office to enforce penalties

11:00 Outline 3-5 point plan
Joshua Verville

- Based on discussion and consensus the group developed a 4-point plan to address unlicensed care in Washington, which is outlined below.

Recommendation # 1

Public relations and communication regarding the benefits of licensed care and the dangers of illegally operating child care. Empower Washington State residents with information through local and statewide efforts:

- Public service announcements
- Post an ad on Craig's list
- Provide information to parents by adding to current packets of information that is given to participants of; WIC, pre-natal visits, parents leaving hospitals with new babies.
- Locally information can be distributed via flyers at churches, grocery stores, businesses

Next Steps:

- DEL is currently soliciting comments from the provider community about the advantages of becoming licensed; this will be included in publications.
- DEL is developing a communication plan.
- Brochures are being developed that discuss the licensing process and advantages, and benefits.
- DEL will be creating and posting an ad on Craig's list on regular basis.

Recommendation # 2

Clearly define exempt care and relative care in WAC.

Next Steps:

- This recommendation will be brought forward to the Negotiated Rule Making Team for consideration in the Family Child Care WAC revisions.

Recommendation # 3

Engage Child Care Resource & Referral Supports

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Next Steps

- This recommendation will be forwarded to DEL's Systems, Partnerships and Collaboration Division, which holds the contract for CCR&R.

Recommendation # 4

When an unlicensed facility is found to be illegally operating and advertising, the AAG's office would send a letter to prevent unlicensed child care ads.

Next Steps:

- DEL is looking at new and creative ways to respond to providers who are operating illegally.
- This includes modifying our letters we send out to the providers, engaging them in a more proactive, customer-friendly manner, and taking firm injunctive measures if necessary.

11:10 Closing remarks including next steps and updates

Lisa La Rue

- Thanked all for taking time to come to the public forum, and stated DEL values their opinions and time
- Stated that DEL recorded forum, and is looking into the possibility of posting it online.
- DEL Assistant Director of the Quality Division Larry Horne committed to leaving the registration information up and available on the Web, and getting notes sent to participants and posted on Web by 1-1-08.
- Stated the recommendations would be presented to Director Jone Bosworth for a decision and action steps would be initiated.