



**Best Start Network  
Summary Notes  
Friday, February 22, 2013  
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
Waterfront Centre**

**Present:** Paul Johnson, Grace Mater, Wanda St. Francois, Karen Calligan, Brenda Bax, Judith Bishop, Karyn Callaghan, Debbie Myers, Jane Soldera, Sharon Stephanian, Laurel Cooke, Andrew Debicki, Christine Fiochio, Marni Flaherty, Paula Forbes, Ivana Fortino, Matt Goodman, Sgt. Harold Harris, Don Jaffray, Pauline Kajiura, Lisa Kiriakopoulos, Ann Lamanes, Laura Martindale, Dina Phillips, Lorraine Robinson, Marion Trent-Kratz, Cheryl Velenosi, Dean Younger

**Regrets:** Shawn Chisholm, Jean Clinton, Jim Commerford, Karen Davis, Ruth Doherty, Denise Doyle, Rocco Gizzarelli, Laura Lukasik, Shirley McCoy, Colin McMullan, Pat Senft, Janis Webster, Ruth Wells

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Discussion/Decision</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Welcome / Declaration of Conflict of Interest / Review of Meeting Notes / Announcements	<p>Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting. He indicated that we will be going through several Framework and Policy Statements this afternoon as well as a series of questions following each presentation. The Co-ordinating Committee felt this was a good opportunity to ensure everyone is clear and on the same page. This is a meeting to knit some of the information together and provide good advice to the Implementation Teams in relation to the Early Years Community Plan.</p> <p>Paul stated we received breaking news that BSN member, Pauline Kajiura, won the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for excellence in Community Service. A round of congratulations was extended to Pauline.</p> <p>In the Spectator today, there was a special “Creative Kids” section. Ads were created by local students for the private sector and community organizations. An ad (located on page 11) was created by a young lady for Best Start.</p> <p>Paul addressed housekeeping issues for the day.</p> <p>Paul shared a number of Hamilton Best Start journeys that have been occurring with</p>	

	<p>colleagues across the province. He and Grace attended a session in Thunder Bay. This region hosted a session for sharing of information amongst their district and Hamilton was invited to participate. Grace and Paul shared our model of building for success through integration of services. It was a practical session and tied to the various policy frameworks. They have different challenges than we do in some ways. Distance poses a huge challenge as it takes 6 hours to get from one end of the district to the other. Yesterday, several BSN members were in London with the Community Integration Leader Group. A thank you was extended to Marion who did a wonderful presentation on the Network’s behalf at this session.</p> <p>Paul asked everyone to carefully review the January meeting minutes prior to the Network accepting and posting them to the website.</p> <p>Birthday wishes were extended to Grace as it is her birthday today.</p> <p>Paul explained that we will be having short presentations to ground us before we move into small-group discussions. Three areas have been identified. A workbook of questions was distributed and groups were asked to write their comments and thoughts in the workbook as a means of capturing the full discussion which will help inform our implementation strategies. The workbooks will be collected at the end of the session this afternoon.</p> <p>A large matrix was developed and illustrates the connections between component parts (i.e.: our vision, strategic framework, Ministry Policy Framework and the Hamilton Early Years Community Plan). We want to be leaders in the work that we do and ensure it is carried through to the work we do in the community. The Provincial Framework guides the work of the Network and transactional approaches. It connects us together and informs where our vision is going. The Early Years Community Plan builds early learning in our community, considers the similarities and differences, where the alignment is occurring and how everything connects and links together. The components work together to support each other and should also align with one another. Are we still in alignment? Is a course correction necessary? If so, this is the time in which we need to make these changes. Paul asked everyone to discuss this in their small groups and to offer feedback to indicate if they are aligned to one another or if a course correction is needed.</p>	<p>Please contact Grace or Joyce if you have any changes to the January BSN meeting minutes.</p>
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<p>2</p>	<p>Highlights of Ontario’s Child Care Policy Framework – Karen Calligan, Ministry of Education</p>	<p>Paul indicated Karen Calligan is presenting the key features of the Early Years Policy Framework.</p> <p>Karen stated she was pleased to be able to provide us with a brief overview of the policy framework and that we likely will be able to see and hear our voice in the document. The document represents the culmination of work that we’ve done in Hamilton and across the province. The focus is on ensuring a seamless service experience for children and families and the lens by which to consider our work. It outlines a vision, guiding principles, a strategic direction and guides the work of the inside of government in partnership with the CMSMs and School Boards, planning tables such as the BSN, etc.</p> <p>The benefits are connected to those we serve - children and families as well as our partners and Ontario as a whole. This is communicated through the vision, guiding principles, partners, etc.</p> <p>The vision is to create a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years’ programs and services that contribute to a healthy child development and a stronger future tomorrow. It is important to consider how they are grounded in research and tied to quality. The Ontario Early Learning Framework website outlines six guiding principles as a lens for reflecting on the quality of the programs and services we are providing.</p> <p>Karen indicated that accessibility is also tied into becoming increasingly integrated. It is part of the work we are doing in Hamilton in the area of integrated planning and the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework challenges us to become ‘increasingly integrated’ seeking opportunities to continuously grow in this area.</p> <p>The guiding principles keep children and families at the centre. It focuses on the development of strong partnerships both outside and within our organizations. How are we meeting the guiding principles within organizations as a legitimate investment in our work? Karen gave an example of how, as part of her performance appraisal, she was asked to give practical examples of how she is building relationships in her work.</p>	
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<p>will also move over to the Ministry of Education from MCYS. This will be beneficial to help and support decision making. The Early Development Instrument (EDI) funding that supports the data piece will be transferred to EDU. This will remain the same for 2013 but it is anticipated that the implementation of this transfer will occur prior to September 2014 to align with the implementation of Best Start Child and Family Centres.</p> <p>Karen concluded by saying she hopes this provides us with a good overview and helps us understand how it links into the work we are doing collectively.</p> <p>Paul thanked Karen for her presentation and led the Network members into the first session of work. The first series of questions pertain to the plan. Paul indicated we may be able to answer burning questions today but others can be taken back for further review and discussion.</p> <p>It was suggested that we might want to brag a little bit where we think we might have influenced government in informing the framework. The group was asked to take a few minutes and respond to questions on their own before moving into the small-group discussions. At the end of today’s meeting, please hand in your workbook to Grace.</p> <p>Small Group Discussion # 1 – Ontario Early Years Policy Framework</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Where do you see the work and direction of Hamilton’s Best Start Initiative aligning with the Provincial Policy Framework?</li><li>2. Are there areas where you believe Hamilton has informed the Provincial Policy Framework?</li><li>3. Are there any “burning questions” about the Provincial Policy Framework your group would like answered?</li></ol> <p>The small groups highlighted aspects of their discussions for each of the three outlined questions:</p>
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	<p><u>Group 1:</u> Ivana reported on behalf of the group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. There has been collaboration with community agencies. It is an established system beginning in the early days of the development of the OEYCs and, on a smaller scale, with the PFLCs. There has also been work on ensuring there is a system of program quality.</li><li>2. In addition to those identified under the first question, it offered us the opportunity to make a submission and provide input to the Modernization document as well as in relation to pooled funding, the provision of efficient services such as the Check-It Outs (CIOs). There is a website for parents which has improved navigation and family physicians as part of the communiqué.</li><li>3. In going forward, the guidelines and framework are established, however, it is important to remain open and sensitive to community needs and where there could be modifications. There is some time sensitivity to the date proposed for the collaboration/merging of the OEYCs and PFLCs. We need to keep in mind the challenges and pressures of the systems involved. We also need to be sensitive to ECEs in terms of their futures and help support them in continuing to be productive in their place of employment.</li></ol> <p><u>Group 2:</u> Don reported of behalf of this group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. This group feels there is strong alignment with the vision and guiding principles between our work and the Provincial Policy Framework. They feel we are on the same page in regard to commitment to partnership work and the role the Network plays in the strengthening of partnerships.</li><li>2. Feel Hamilton has contributed to stabilizing the child care system, however, there is more work to be done in this area.</li><li>3. Will all of this work survive a change in government and should we be paying attention to this, if so, how?</li></ol> <p>Paul indicated this is a good question – how do we keep this work front and centre regardless of which government is in power?</p>	
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	<p><u>Group 3:</u> Wanda reported on behalf of the group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. She indicated their discussion was similar to other tables. We are working as a system. In Hamilton, we have focused on service co-ordination – being inclusive, providing quality services and addressing the child care needs in the city.</li><li>2. The group unanimously feel Hamilton has informed the Provincial Policy Framework. We have used a systems integration approach since the planning stages of the OEYCs. One proposal was submitted to the Ministry from Hamilton when the OEYCs were implemented. We were the only community to take this approach. We are also culturally inclusive and provide quality services.</li><li>3. Where is the fit for the Early Literacy Specialists? Is there anything more to share about the speech and language system? Report indicates that preschool speech and language will remain with MCYS and that there is a bigger vision/plan. Also wondering about the fit with school health supports re: Policy Framework. There are primary care issues for families and a need for links between newcomers and programs. Whatever we build, we need to ensure there are standards for quality of care in all programs.</li></ol> <p><u>Group 4:</u> Marni reported on behalf of this group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The vision of the Provincial Policy Framework is similar to that of Hamilton’s vision. Hamilton’s Parent Charter ties to family engagement and is also outlined within the Provincial Framework, i.e.: family-centred care, co-ordinated, integrated early years’ plan, etc.</li><li>2. Systems approach makes good sense in the Provincial Framework re: system of care.</li></ol> <p><u>Group 5:</u> Ann reported on behalf of this group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The group had lots of similarities to other groups. The Ministry Policy Framework, similar to the vision of Hamilton’s Best Start, talks about a shared vision and the delivery of programs and services that build on the strengths of children.</li></ol>	
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3	<p>Overview of the 2012-2015 Early Years Community Plan – Jane Soldera, City of Hamilton</p> <p>&amp;</p> <p>Overview of the Best Start Strategic Plan – Grace Mater, City of Hamilton</p>	<p>Due to time constraints, the next two agenda items were combined.</p> <p>Jane stated that the 2012-2015 Early Years Community Plan was distributed to Network members at the last meeting. She indicated that she feels the value is in having everyone work through the questions. The document provides a local and national context and outlines various child care funding models from across the country. The plan provides us with additional resources and best practice information as well as information from key stakeholders including children and parents. There are challenges identified and recommendations related to the challenges. Areas are identified by themes such as system integration, access to information, building system capacity, system focused, stabilization of the child care system, etc.</p> <p>The Steering Group which provided guidance in regard to the report will be reconvened next week to steer the three-year implementation strategy. Jane will be Co-Chairing this Steering Group with Wanda on behalf of the Network. Jane indicated there are two key questions in the work book on which they want to obtain input on today.</p> <p>Grace stated there are three priorities of the Best Start Strategic Framework, they are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. System of Care</li> <li>2. Pathways to Learning</li> <li>3. Basic Needs</li> </ol> <p>The key question we need to know is ‘are we still on track?’</p> <p>Paul indicated they would also like to get an idea as to whether we see the</p>	

		<p>recommendations as short, medium or long-term objectives and the key recommendations where they feel the BSN would play a leadership role. Paul stated that not all of them are the work of the Network but there are recommendations outlined where we would be able to directly make change.</p> <p>When considering our Best Start Strategic Plan and the two policy frameworks, we are interested in knowing whether the BS plan is still relevant. The proposed activities are preliminary suggestions and some may or may not move forward or they may change and new activities emerge.</p> <p>Following the small-group discussions, Paul noted there was a lot of discussion in reference to the recommendations and there could have been a bit more time spent in refining the recommendations. We will continue to refine the recommendations. Some appeared easy to determine while others needed fuller discussion. The Steering Committee will be asked to look at the recommendations further and bring back any questions for deeper discussion.</p> <p>Everyone was asked to leave their workbook with Grace.</p> <p>Paul asked those who were able to discuss the last question – ‘is the Best Start Strategic Framework still relevant’ to share their thoughts. The response from the Network was ‘yes, we are on the right path and do not require a course correction’.</p>	<p>Grace indicated they will try to synthesize the information from the workbooks and send back the compilation to members.</p>
4	Other Business	<p>Karyn Callaghan announced that Dr. Lilian Katz is coming next Friday afternoon to our area. Grace has provided BSN members with the opportunity to participate in this session which will be very interactive. Dr. Katz is very engaging and has lots of expertise to share. Karyn hopes there will be a strong showing from Hamilton.</p>	
6	Adjourn	<p><b>Please note: there is no meeting scheduled in March.</b>          Next Meeting is scheduled for:  <b>Friday, April 19th, 2013</b>  <b>1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</b>  <b>The Waterfront Centre (formerly the Chamber of Commerce – 555 Bay St. N., Hamilton)</b></p>	