

Early Language Working Group

October 20, 2017, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union Conference Room
1126 College Walk, Honolulu Hawaii

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance:

Jennifer Blohm, Ed Chevy, Carole Duran, Jennifer Hokulani Tarnay, Nikki Kepo'o, Coleen Momohara, Emily Jo Noschese, Gwen Palmer, Jill Taosaka, Julie Whitaker, Colin Whited.

Facilitator: Leolinda Parlin

Observers: Patricia Heu, MD, Angela Nagata, Keiko Nitta, Cassandra Quilit, Po Kwan Wong, Caleb Kepo'o, Rebekah Kepo'o.

1. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves by name and indicated which role they were representing.

2. Minutes – 9/5/17 meeting

Question on the minutes on p. 2 #7 regarding kupuna vs. Makua and why there was a distinction being used. Facilitator explained that it was referencing generational differences where some mentors may be too young to be called kupuna. Suggestion to just call it "mentor" because it is clearer and distinguishes from a peer. Question on how to document the change on the last minutes or include in this discussion. Facilitator clarified that minutes will reflect the change and that it will be included in this discussion and also as part of the ELWG summary decision. Group needs to vote to approve minutes.

3. ELWG Summary

The Early Learning Working Group Summary has been updated. Whatever is bolded is what was added to the matrix since the last meeting that will help lead to recommendations from the group such as the recommendation for the Assessment Planning workgroup (DOE/DOH) that there needs to be a survey about transition and that there are not enough deaf educators and specialized personnel (oral educators, deaf-blind, etc.).

Need to have a general term to help with writing the report that is inclusive of oral deaf, ASL, deaf-blind, to make sure it is inclusive of all types of children and to cover the whole spectrum. Example of explaining role of deaf mentor was given where group needs to decide how to capture options available for families. Suggestion of communication or tactile interpretation. Group wanted a general term for the spectrum of needs. Recommendation from the group was in writing the document, whatever term is used will include a definition in the beginning that there is recognition for each of the different language needs in the spectrum. Communication was decided to be more inclusive – "Spectrum of Communication Needs."

4. Review checklists on age-appropriate language development

Clarification that parent materials are not standardized tools but were checklists for families such as the checklists from California. Assessments were standardized tools and more formal than the parent checklists which were more like guidelines. Example of SKI-HI was given where it is a formal curriculum but also includes parent checklist. It was explained that providers would like to use the SKI-HI as a

formal assessment but that there needs to be recertification of those who were trained on it and there are associated costs with this.

Another example was given with the California checklist where in CA the DOE is responsible to send the Parent Profile for parents to understand the 0-3, 3-6, 6-12 months and after 1 year on language, social emotional, or behavioral. Concern that even if Hawaii has checklists, there is still a lack of resources. Purpose of the checklist is to explain that this is to help parents understand where their child should be at different ages.

Recommendation that two people will look at the checklist since it will fall under a resource guide for families. It can be used as a navigator guide, collateral material, or a checklist to share with families. Jennifer Blohm and Carole Duran volunteered to review SKI-HI and California.

- 5. Discuss recommendation for a workgroup to establish community standard for assessing language development for children age 0-5 years who are D/HH/DB**
- 6. Discuss recommendations for data on language and literacy development for children age 0-5 years who are D/HH/DB**
- 7. Review and discuss the transition of children age 3 years from DOH early intervention services to DOE**

Ten people completed the survey on transition. Survey wanted to get information on range of transition processes. Two areas with big difficulty around transitions are from natural environment to classroom and from natural environment to community (non DOE). The process for transition are from indicators that Feds use. Basically the survey found that the responses were mixed:

- Agencies have a shared vision of transition: people felt that there was not real evidence and that there is not a shared vision of what transition is;
- Data sharing: half and half, maybe works, maybe it doesn't.
- Meetings: meetings accomplish specific purposes when the right staff are at the meetings.
- Families have mechanism to provide input and express concerns: available in EI, but mixed on the DOE side.
- Transitioning out of EI into the community: big concern from families.

General comments:

- Globally there is a philosophy change between EI and DOE where EI is family-centered but when going to DOE, it was child-centered which felt like it was DOE-centered. Group discussed the need to help families prepare for this shift in philosophy. Needs to be opportunity for more parent support and opportunities to meet through peer mentorship where families can learn from each other about the DOE experiences. Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii provides workshops.
- Group also discussed importance of having all the representatives at the meetings so the family does not feel that the DOE is predetermining decisions for the child. It helps to have representatives from all the schools or able to explain different philosophies so

it doesn't feel like one school is the only choice. Facilitator explained that per federal law, IEP meetings are required to have an administrator and that may not always be explained to parents. Group discussed that there is a need to help parents understand the process because there is a lot of information at the first IEP meeting.

- In some cases, the parent may not have decided which option they think is best for their child and need to know what the options are – but sometimes the option is not available in their community. Need to figure out how to make choices available. Some districts have relationships within their complexes and are able to share. There needs to be a list of choices and how to make choices available in all communities while recognizing there are limitations.
- Question raised on the Hawaii School for Deaf and Blind and whether that should be presented as an option for a 3-year-old to dorm. Suggestions that there could be options for children and parents to transition their child to get used to dorming at the school so when they can at 9 it is easier. Question raised as to whether the school should revisit their guidelines for how a young child is able to go into the dormitories or to the school from another island. Concern that 9 is too late for the language window.
- Example of Itinerant Hearing Impaired Resource Teacher (HIRT) who was able to develop a pros and con's list for the child and how the needs could be met. Suggestion to provide facilitated options counseling so there can be a spectrum of options and then the pros and cons would help narrow down the choices based on the child's needs.
- A Member raised the concern that all this information is not new to the DOE. Unfortunately sometimes it takes a due process hearing that makes a district provide training. There also needs to be more than training and knowledge but also communication and delivery of the message. The DOE Strategic Plan includes a section on transition and suggestion that the group may include this piece with the DOE Strategic Plan. It is not just about how to help families transition but also how can schools be ready to accept and transition and support families through the process.
- Group revisited the Itinerant HIRT's IEP meeting where she was not just proactive and developed the pros and cons list but she was also supported by her administration to function in that capacity. Appears to be discrepancy in each district as to what functions an itinerant teacher is able to provide.
- Group addressed concern about geographic boundaries for Early Intervention which creates disparity in different levels of service with different care providers. Similar to how DOE has different districts with a variety of programs. Recognition that not every region is created equally but that there should be standardization that there is opportunity to counsel parents and engage them in a way that is successful. There may be hierarchy within the CAS, DES, and principals. In emotional/behavioral issues, there are different programs but there are criteria to go into those specific programs because of the degree of least restrictive environment. This may be a placement issue and there is confusion. Group discussed the need for parents deserve the ability to make their own choice and they should choose where they want the child should go.
- Concern that everything may exist on paper but whether or not it actually happens is different. Member raised the concern that there may not always be clarity about the

least restrictive environment process and that there may be confusion in the school, complex areas or even amongst the CAS. Unless there is clarity from the schools it is understandable that it is confusing for parents. Even before the conversation about options of where the child can go, there needs to be conversation before that. Needs to have consistency.

- Suggestion for the group to look at examples of inconsistencies so that the conversations with DOE can be focused.
- Suggestion for a support team of specialists and changing contracts or creating MOUs between agencies to get past administrative barriers. Group discussed developing a recommendation about this. Need specialization in ASL, cochlear implants, auditory-verbal therapy or listening therapy or spoken language therapy (group discussed that AVT is not evidence-based). May not need to have a specialist at every center but that there should be a team to be able to access those children as they arise. Question on the mobile team before EI started doing natural environment: could there be a Communication Spectrum Mobile team similar to the medically fragile/medically complex team.
- Group discussed the need to address concerns through making recommendations.

Data from DOE has to go through many different levels and permissions. By counting the children in all the reports, there are 26 kids and three others in the state. Reports do not list a secondary eligibility. Recommendation that DOE has a database of all children with deaf/hard of hearing needs or identified who have a hearing loss. There may be a way to do this in DOE with a button such as one that is used to count the children with autism. Similarly there needs to be a similar database in EIS. Another recommendation is that newborn hearing screen needs to be able to talk to EI and cross databases. Needs to be agreement for data-sharing from Newborn Hearing Screening to EI, to DOE so everyone knows what is happening with the child. This data will also help with legislative efforts. May be a possibility of EI legislature on the database since it is in the budget request. Members may need to go to the legislature to testify in support of the EI database.

8. Discuss improvements concerning the statewide system of services that support age-appropriate language development for children age 0-5 years who are D/HH/DB

Group discussed the writing of the report. Facilitator explained that she is in the process of writing the report with the background information. Next week she will be flushing out some of the recommendations and share at the next meeting to see if any recommendations are missing. Wordsmithing will happen in December meeting to finalize the report. Facilitator explained that group has reached saturation point where at least 95% of the issues across the spectrum have been discussed and the next phase is to move towards recommendations. Group discussed the Deaf Bill of Rights and whether it might help to get appropriate language access. Question of whether it was enforceable or a mission statement. Question of whether it is a Civil Rights issue or a regulatory issue that requires statutory oversight.

9. Future meetings in 2017 – 3-5 p.m.

November 9, 2017 HSDB library

December 1, 2017 Hawaii USA conference room

10. Public Comment

Public commented about the Deaf Rights bill and how one district was able to use it to provide services where the principal was able to pass it on to the state attorney and ordered the district to provide transportation using the Bill of rights. Another concern raised was about LRE and how parents may not be the experts and school authorities come to the meetings and tell parents this is the law. Concern that CAS and DES do not want to invite the deaf school to IEP meetings and that there is confusion and needs to have consistency within the state. Speaker shared the experience of taking a mother to the deaf school to see the Deaf School and how that helped the mother.

Meeting Adjourned.