



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

Room 411 South, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

November 14, 2008
10:00 a.m. – 4:10 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the November 14, 2008 meeting of the Special Committee on Strengthening Wisconsin Families. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Co-Chair Kestell called the meeting to order. The roll was called and it was determined that a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Steve Kestell and Sen. Lena Taylor, Co-Chairs; Sen. Dale Schultz; Rep. Sheryl Albers; and Public Members Jon Angeli, John Burgess, Lucille Rosenberg, Mary Jo Tittl, and Jack Westman.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rep. Tamara Grigsby; and Public Members Gary Erdmann, Debra Fields, Undraye Howard, and Terence Ray.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Anne Sappenfield, Senior Staff Attorney; and Jessica Karls, Staff Attorney.

APPEARANCES: Jack Tweedie, Group Director, Children and Families Program, National Conference of State Legislatures; Audrey Laszewski, Project Director, The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin; and Jane Penner-Hoppe and Kimmie Collins, Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Approval of the Minutes of the Committee's October 16, 2008 Meeting

Mr. Burgess moved, seconded by Representative Albers, to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2008 meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Presentations by Invited Speakers

- ***Jack Tweedie, Group Director, Children and Families Program, National Conference of State Legislatures***

Jack Tweedie began his presentation with a discussion of the reasons why states should invest in early childhood development, including the cost savings that early investment creates. He noted the importance of early experiences in shaping brain development prenatally to age five and the impact of childhood interventions on reductions in spending for school and criminal justice. He highlighted the risk factors for intensive programs, including toxic stress, single-parent families, first-time parents, poverty, and teen motherhood.

Mr. Tweedie described the correlation between childhood poverty and outcomes in health, earnings, education, teen pregnancy, and juvenile justice involvement. He noted that childhood poverty may lead to lesser earnings and mental health issues in adulthood. He went on to describe the research that demonstrates that home visitation programs can improve outcomes for children. He indicated that the effects of participation in a home visitation program are greater where a child or family has increased risk factors, such as poverty. He highlighted the effects of a home visitation program on parenting, child abuse and neglect, cognitive development of a child, and social development and health.

Mr. Tweedie then described the pyramid approach to home visitation: (1) a universal program serves all expectant and new mothers and families; (2) an intensive program serves children and families with specific risk factors, such as poverty, abuse and neglect, or homelessness; and (3) a targeted program serves children and families with identified needs, such as substance abuse or physical disability. He further outlined the differences between universal, intensive, and targeted programs. Lastly, he indicated that low-intensity programs have lower returns on the investment, whereas high-cost programs focused on specific risks often have stronger returns on the investment.

Mr. Tweedie responded to questions from committee members.

- ***Audrey Laszewski, Project Director, The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project of Wisconsin***

Audrey Laszewski began her presentation by describing home visitation in Wisconsin. She noted that the models of home visitation vary throughout the state; that communities are where home visitation programs are occurring; and that home visitation programs are limited in comprehensive services by a lack of funding. She emphasized the local control involved in home visitation programs, noting that programs are integrated with community resources. She described the Parents as Teachers model and noted that it is the most dominant model used in Wisconsin.

Ms. Laszewski described the two home visitation initiatives that involve the state. First, she described how Family Foundations involves funding that is currently awarded to nine counties and one tribe for home visitation programs targeted to first-time parents who are Medicaid eligible. She noted that funding under Family Foundations accounts for 10% to 45% of the total funding of the Family Foundations programs. Second, she described Empowering Families of Milwaukee as a comprehensive targeted demonstration program. She noted that the program targets pregnant women and certain families in high-risk areas in Milwaukee.

Ms. Laszewski emphasized the need for a statewide infrastructure to support home visitation. She described The Early Years Home Visitation Outcomes Project and noted the efforts of the project in measuring common outcomes among home visitation programs. She indicated that a statewide infrastructure may aid in measuring common outcomes. She finished her presentation by making recommendations to the committee, which included the following: provision of stable funding for home visitation programs; development of a comprehensive plan for home visitation in the state by an independent consultant; creation of a formal funding stream to support and evaluate home visitation programs; development of comprehensive technical assistance and training; allocation of funding based on outcomes; and recognition that many home visitation models are valuable.

Ms. Laszewski responded to questions from committee members.

Discussion of Committee Assignment

Home Visitation

Jessica Karls explained 2007 Assembly Bill 663 and noted that Assembly Bill 663 does not require that a home visitation program follow a specific model but does require that the program focus on child abuse and prevention.

Mr. Westman noted that every new home visitation program should evaluate itself. Ms. Karls indicated that Assembly Bill 663 requires that each program be evaluated.

Co-Chair Kestell noted that outcomes matter more than statistics.

Ms. Tittl stated that the committee could add more criteria to the outcome evaluation in Assembly Bill 663.

Co-Chair Kestell explained that the program should measure its effectiveness over time.

Ms. Tittl asked that training be available for all home visitation staff, not just staff of Family Foundations programs.

Discussion of Materials Distributed

- ***Memo No. 4, WLC: 0125/2, Relating to Children Who Are Involved in Multiple Systems of Care and Their Families (November 7, 2008)***

Anne Sappenfield described Memo No. 4, *WLC: 0125/2, Relating to Children Who Are Involved in Multiple Systems of Care and Their Families*. She explained the modifications to the definitions of “child,” “service system,” and “service coordinator” in WLC: 0125/2. In addition, she explained that “project coordinator” was replaced with “initiative coordinator” in the bill draft and that, under WLC: 0125/2, a judge may order an assessment for participation in a coordinated services team (CST) initiative.

- ***WLC: 0125/2, relating to children who are involved in multiple systems of care and their families, and making an appropriation***

Committee members discussed WLC: 0125/2, relating to children who are involved in multiple systems of care and their families, and making an appropriation.

Mr. Westman requested clarification on the definition of “child.” Ms. Sappenfield explained that “child” includes children with severe disabilities but is not limited to those children and that, rather, it applies to any child who is involved in multiple systems of care, including children with severe disabilities.

Ms. Tittl requested that Ms. Sappenfield and Ms. Karls provide a visual depiction of the structure of a CST initiative.

Mr. Westman indicated that the word “integrated” rather than “coordinated” is used at the federal level. He also asked whether the number of parents on the coordinating committee is appropriate. Co-Chair Taylor responded that the number of parents is appropriate. Co-Chair Kestell noted that a parent can also fill another role on the coordinating committee. Ms. Tittl emphasized that direct consumer involvement is important and that many committees have 50% involvement by consumers. Mr. Westman noted that he likes the size of the coordinating committee.

Committee members discussed the fiscal effect of WLC: 0125/2. Discussion included whether to put the amount of the appropriation in the bill draft and whether to seek funding from another source. Committee members decided to further investigate whether funding could be provided from another source in the state’s budget. In its discussion of the fiscal effects of WLC: 0125/2, committee members also briefly discussed the fiscal effects of home visitation. Mr. Westman described a provision in the statutes that requires that an amount equal to one percent of the Department of Corrections budget be used for child abuse and neglect prevention. Ms. Tittl noted that the state could use a statewide infrastructure for home visitation as a means to obtain federal funding. Mr. Burgess said that he believes that the state could change its priorities with the corrections system to fund coordinated services teams initiatives and home visitation.

Co-Chair Kestell suggested that the committee develop a broader, position statement. Ms. Sappenfield indicated that the committee could include that statement in the report to the Joint Legislative Council and, if the committee wanted to, it could write the scope of the next study committee.

Update from the Department of Children and Families

- ***Jane Penner-Hoppe, Department of Children and Families***

Jane Penner-Hoppe noted that she would respond to specific questions from legislators that were raised at the October 16, 2008 meeting by responding individually to that legislator’s office. She introduced Kimmie Collins as the new legislative liaison for DCF. Ms. Collins introduced herself and described her previous legislative experience.

Ms. Penner-Hoppe described the Early Childhood Council, which was created by an Executive Order and as part of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The Council will foster cooperation and collaboration across systems and will hold public hearings throughout the state. She indicated that she would discuss the Economic Success Summit and the federal law relating to foster care at future meetings of the Special Committee.

Ms. Penner-Hoppe indicated that DCF is supportive of the concepts in 2007 Assembly Bill 663 but is still in the process of transitioning Family Foundations from the Department of Health Services to DCF. She also indicated she would discuss WLC: 0125/2 with DCF's legal counsel and get feedback regarding the language in the bill draft. Lastly, she agreed to get information about the status of the child care evaluation system.

Plans for Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Special Committee will be on *Thursday, December 4, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 300 Southeast, State Capitol, Madison.*

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

JK:jal