



Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region

Partnering for early literacy. Ensuring a stronger future.

ELAWR Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, November 25, 2014 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Community Room at Waterloo Public Library – John M. Harper Branch
500 Fischer-Hallman Road North, Waterloo

Present: Gabriele Croft, Cameron Dearlove, Joanne Davis, Machel Denison, Joanne Stronge, Wanda Kampijan, Laura Dick, Maria Milne, Samantha Burns, Katie Jackman, Colette Moffat, Cathy Scott, Caitlyn Hicks, Jill Watson, Tierney Hunter, Kelly Kipfer, Laura Reed

Visitors: Anna Humphries, Mike Farwell, Dr. Stephanie Denison, Dr. Katherine White

Regrets: Mary Trottier, Chris Beck, Janelle Wenger, Kim Krueger-Kischak

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review and approval of September 23rd meeting minutes – As a follow-up of the Sept meeting new Terms of Reference with Financial accountability, were approved by electronic voting of the committee members. 21/22 voted in favour of accepting the new terms. (Attached to these minutes)
3. Presentation: Infant Studies Group at University of Waterloo (Dr. Stephanie Denison/Dr. Katherine White, www.babylab@uwaterloo.ca)

-Dr. White's research focuses on language development of infants – establishing norms for babbling, speech perception as it relates to word knowledge and receptive language. Focusing on baby's recognition of words, effect of phonological variations in word production – e.g. can baby understand "dog" when produced as "tog" or "dawg" (Boston accent) or when produced with greater changes such as "pog" or "fog"? Babies' responses involve looking at the item, so eye gaze is measured. She is interested in knowing if baby's perception of sounds relates to later vocabulary development and possibly literacy skills. There are reportedly some longitudinal studies in progress that suggest there is a relationship. She has also looked at sub-groups such as autism sibling studies, noting that they are less dependent on "child-directed" intonation (i.e. "motherese") than the general population.

-Dr. Denison's research focuses on cognitive development – i.e. how children learn, looking at how they understand absurdities –what do children notice? – e.g. a ball starts to roll when another ball hits it – what if the ball rolls before the first ball hits it or if a delay happens after contact? Do children notice this? She is looking at how learning happens, and how might this be predictive of learning problems.

Both researchers are looking for connections within the community to parents who might be interested in participating in this research. Infants from 6 months to 4 or 5 years of age are being studied. Usually the sessions are only about 5-10 minutes long, appear “game-like” to children. Due to ethics, no payment is allowed, though a small prize such as a book can often be offered to families who participate.

The research is published in professional journals (see website for more info about research published to date).

4. Budget update - Gabriele

The conference had total revenue of \$9,823.00 (registrations plus vendors)

The conference expenses amounted to \$6,605.13.

Overall net profit was \$3,217.87.

With reserve conference fund (\$5000) and unused funds from previous year (\$1309.84), ELAWR's financial net funds currently amount to \$9,527.71.

5. Subcommittee updates

- October 25, 2014 ELAWR conference – A successful conference was held with 115 registrants, and a total of 160 attendees. Keynote was positively received, as were the workshops with 1 hour sessions in the afternoon preferred by many. Extremely positive evaluations received, with more discussion to occur following the meeting (sub-committee meeting).
- January 25, 2015 Family Literacy Day – website work has been ongoing over the past few weeks with a link from the FLD website to the ELAWR website and the multiple organizations represented. ELAWR is taking the lead with this event at Conestoga Mall this year.
- Website/Facebook/Twitter- Sam, Wanda, Katie and Kim are ensuring continuity of posting by sharing passwords so team can cover for one another should the need arise. All ELAWR members are encouraged to forward links/comments for posting.
- Promotions – the sub-committee has not met recently, but asked about promotion of FLD – a flyer, a social media campaign and blog page are being created. It is anticipated that ELAWR brochures will be handed out to families at the event.

- Core planning – not met recently, as we are awaiting future directions re L.S. Award before formalizing goals for the next year.
6. A) Discussion to determine next steps for ELAWR (if decision is known about Lynda Silvester Award application) – deferred til next meeting
- B) Highlights from presentations at the ELAWR Conference and/or Niagara Speech Services Conference – Gabriele provided updates on 1) Infant Mental Health as discussed by Dr. Chaya Kulkarni (keynote at ELAWR conference) and noted website: www.imhpromotion.ca. Free information is available until Dec 1st to the public; after that, a membership to IMHPromotion is required. Under resources, “help me grow” includes information about social and emotional developmental milestones, as well as specific ways families can help children at various age levels. In her workshop Developmental Support Planning she provided ideas of how community service providers can help families after referring them to specialized services (i.e. with simple practical strategies “while they wait.”) The long-term effects of childhood abuse and neglect were discussed and the need for responsive, supportive adults in children’s lives to help them be resilient. 2) Hanen’s handout “Shoot for the SSTaRS” was circulated: re vocabulary development during book sharing.
7. Member organization updates
- a) Family Centre – Cameron noted that a suite of programs based on the resilience model is being offered to children and youth. Community partners are being encouraged to participate along with the family centre. Family-centred programs that focus on music and art are being offered.
 - b) KPL-Laura Reed is happy to re-connect with ELAWR again as the KPL rep. KPL is in the process of defining their new space after the recent construction. She noted that students from the Infant Lab often come to KPL’s baby focused programs.
 - c) WPL- Kelly Kipfer noted an event on Saturday which focused on the implementation of “Every Child Ready to Read” principles.
 - d) Idea Exchange (formerly CPL) – Caitlyn noted that Helen Kelly is the new CEO of Idea Exchange. Caitlyn discussed “exploring the floor” programing with parents and their children considering questions such as “How does learning look in unstructured environments?” and “How do parents play with their children when there are no prescribed rules?”
 - e) Strong Start – Mabelle noted that the regular programming (Letters, Sounds, and Words) is well under way and new training program has been made possible through Dream Home fundraising. “Get Ready for School” programs are ready to start up again in Jan 2015 at 12

- sites (4 are new). Most programs are full with the exception of Bridgeport, Chandler-Mowat, the Family Centre and Victoria Hills. – i.e. spaces still available.
- f) Baby Connections – Machelle reported that the community partners met to share information in Sept – including how to network, communicate with one another more, and to share the results of their work more readily. A centralized data base is being developed to disseminate information and to collect evaluative data. Work is being completed by a software database company. A new PA for the program will be hired soon.
 - g) WCDSB – Colette noted that the Catholic Board is taking a Mental Health focus this year. They have partnered with the Mood Disorders Association and have a campaign “The elephant in the room”. See more information on the www.wcdsb.ca website. Early learning programming is focused on self-regulation in the classroom – identifying stressors, developing resilience and using the tool “How does learning happen?” as a guide. JK registration is gearing up for February, with January parent info nights coming up.
 - h) LINC – Maria noted assessments of LINC programs have been completed. Child Care network collaboration is being planned for special needs clients. LINC is meeting with KW Habilitation on Dec. 1st to determine if consultation is available for LINC clients in need of extra support. Staff are studying the “How does Learning Happen” document. A Baby Connections staff refresher is being planned.
 - i) Region of Waterloo Home Child Care – Joanne noted that this year there will be collaboration with the Early Learning Conference (Conestoga College) rather than a separate Home Child Care providers conference.
 - j) Conestoga College PRC – Sam noted that the annual Early Learning Conference is being held on March 7th, 2015 with 400+ attendees expected. The conference is moving to one-hour time slots for workshops, with participants able to take advantage of 5 hours of Professional development. The document “How does Learning Happen” was featured last weekend, November 15th during a one day symposium held at the college for 120 ECEs with guest speaker, Karen Calligan and Rod Peturson from the M of Ed. Sam noted that the Family Literacy Certificate is moving to another dept (no longer part of ECE). Caitlyn, since employed at the ECE PRC, has become more involved with Facebook, twitter, and bimonthly newsletter. She is actively searching for articles for professionals on early learning, literacy, including research and would appreciate submissions from committee members/organizations.
 - k) Our Place Family Resource Centre and OEYC– Wanda noted that the document “How does Learning Happen” is being applied to parent-child programs with interactive components, and therefore, there will be a break from the Guest speaker series starting in January.

- l) WRDSB – Cathy reported that the FDK programming is keeping SLPs busy with consultations re the promotion of phonological awareness and oral language stimulation in the classrooms.
 - m) Project READ – Joanne noted that Get Set Learn is coming to an end for the fall and will start up again in the spring. The “after school” version of GSL is being run at Queen Elizabeth school with good success. Project READ is developing partnerships with KPL, and Our Place and are working with families on “Explore the Floor” practices. Family Literacy programs for grandparents (a series of 4 workshops) with WPL as a partner will be starting up again soon. In the past they have had 15-20 grandparents enrolled in the program.
 - n) KidsAbility – Gabriele noted that KA opened a new satellite office in Cambridge at Langs Farm for autism services. New funding dollars were recently announced for children’s treatment centres. KidsAbility will focus on decreasing wait times for Seedlings (under 30 months’ SLP services) and the SKIP program (OT, PT, and SLP services for “School Kids Intervention Program” aged 4-5 years) by enhancing staffing to serve these groups. She noted “O Christmas Free” program will run on Dec. 6th for families to receive free babysitting (from 100 staff and volunteers) while their parents have a morning of Christmas shopping.
8. Future meetings –from the recent doodle poll, Tuesday pm was most popular response; Monday pm was second most popular.

Plan: next meeting is January 27th from 1 to 3:30.

Location: Family Centre , 65 Hanson, Kitchener, Room 1020.

Recorded by: Gabriele S Croft