



Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region

Partnering for early literacy. Ensuring a stronger future.

ELAWR Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, Sept 21, 2015 from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Kitchener Public Library, Country Hills Branch, 1500 Block Line Road, Kitchener

Present: Gabriele Croft, Jaime Griffis, Julie Tonin, Janelle Wenger, Maria Milne, Joanne Stronge, Machelles Denison, Maria Andrei-Gedjo, Laura Reed, Laura Dick, Kim Krueger-Kischak, Amber Holmes, Andrea Siemens, Joanne Davis, Stephanie Denison, Katherine White, Rebecca Dahle, Marci Nicolaisen, Brenda Mak, Amber Holmes

Regrets: Vicki Miles, Chris Beck, Cathy Scott, Wanda Kampijan, Mary Trottier, Tierney Hunter, Jill Watson, Kaitlin Jackman

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review and approval of Strategic Plan (March- July 2015) – pre-circulated summary and comprehensive versions
 - Vision: may need to bold the first sentence and only use it as the abbreviated vision in some situations; was accepted by members
 - Goals and Key Initiatives: work on Section A (Create Awareness of the Importance of Early Literacy) and Section B (Influence the Influencers)first , continue with Section C (Provide Professional Resources and Learning Opportunities), work on Section D (Build Health Care Providers Distribution Channel) in the future, Section E (Enhance Organizational Effectiveness) is internal work; was accepted by members
3. Budget update - Gabriele
 - a. Lynda Silvester Award: spent \$13,236.48 on the strategic plan; currently have \$36,763.52 remaining for work on communications and advocacy
 - b. General ELAWR account: currently have \$8,852.30 (reserve \$5,000 for future conferences)
4. Lynda Silvester Award Update and ELAWR 2015-2016 work plans
 - a. Project planner document outlines our work stream (see attached)
 - b. Strategic Plan: completed

- c. Communications Strategy: Sept 21 deadline for proposal submission; Core Planning Group is interviewing and hope to have someone hired by end of October
 - d. Advocacy: Andrea recommended looking to Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care as an example; Kim and Laura Dick will be speaking with some literacy contacts in London about their advocacy work; plan to start working on this in November or December
5. Sub-committees for 2015/2016 – reviewed descriptions and asked members to sign up for (at least) one subcommittee; people who missed the meeting or new members will be asked to sign up at a later day; current subcommittee commitments are:
- a. Conference: Gabriele Croft, Kim Krueger-Kischak, Katherine White, Stephanie Denison, PRC rep?
 - b. Communications/Promotion/Marketing Project: Machel Denison, Laura Reed, Laura Dick, Kim Krueger-Kischak, Gabriele Croft, Wanda Kampijan
 - c. Early Literacy Café: Kim Krueger-Kischak, Maria Andrei-Gedja, Maria Milne, Janelle Wenger
 - d. Advocacy Project: Laura Dick, Kim Krueger-Kischak, Machel Denison, Laura Reed, Gabriele Croft, Andrea Siemens/Jaime Griffis, Maria Andrei-Gedja, Rebecca Dahle
 - e. Family Literacy Day: Kim Krueger-Kischak, Laura Dick, Maria Andrei-Gedja, Maria Milne, Katherine White, Stephanie Denison, Brenda Mak, Marci Nicolaisen
 - f. Core Planning: Kim Krueger-Kischak, Gabriele Croft, Machel Denison, Laura Dick, Laura Reed, Jaime Griffis
6. Outstanding requests to present at an ELAWR meeting
- a. Nutristep Nutrition Screening Tool: ELAWR was approached by ROW Public Health about providing information at an ELAWR meeting; some members have been trained in using Nutristep, but others have not; is valuable for ELAWR members to know about other supports for children and what our fellow CPT members are offering; voted to offer optional Nutristep training immediately before the November 24th ELAWR meeting
 - b. Oxford Learning Centre: ELAWR membership is currently for not-for-profits; need more discussion around membership (Consider: Will people be joining as a rep of their organization or business or as an individual advocate? could consider rules of engagement – cannot sell services or your organization, but OK to network; we want to ignite and drive a literacy movement and that suggests moving far beyond our members; need to re-consider membership and look at our terms of reference in a separate meeting to be called)

7. Member organization updates (2-3 minutes per organization/member)

Early Literacy Specialist (Kim Krueger-Kischak)

- New Early Literacy Rating Scale developed by Region of Peel Early Literacy Specialists; a scan of the environment and interactions; will be trying out the scale at some different locations this fall; contact Kim if you are interested in having the scan administered at your site(s)
- Lots of community conversations about infant and toddler mental health; connects very closely to language and literacy development; several ELAWR members have indicated interest if the Infant Toddler Mental Health Community Training is offered again
- The April 2nd 2016 Early Learning and Child Care Conference is looking for presenters; proposals are due November 2nd (<http://www.eceprc.ca/news.html>)
- Children's Planning Table met September 14th; shared philosophy and access working groups continue; voted to change the age of focus from birth-12 to pre-birth to 18/school exit (wordsmithing is still being done); will have a CPT forum in November
- Kim will be participating in the new "Leading Transformational Change" course offered this fall by ROW and Conestoga College
- Upcoming literacy conferences/workshops/events:
 - o Saturday, September 26: Word on the Street Festival for Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge International Festival
 - o Saturday, October 3: Play with Literacy Conference: Loose Parts and Literacy in Fergus
<http://www.qccigw.ca/uploads/userfiles/file/PLAY%20Conference%202015.pdf>
 - o Thursday, October 22: Kim will have a literacy info booth at KW Counselling's Parent Education Resource Fair <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/parenting-education-resource-fair-guest-speaker-alyson-schafer-tickets-18541953482>
 - o Thursday, October 29: ELAWR literacy café for professionals on building relationships that support early literacy development
<http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/elawr-literacy-cafe-for-professionals-building-relationships-that-support-early-literacy-development-tickets-18481116517>
 - o Monday, November 30 – Tuesday, December 1: Speech Services Niagara "Speaking of Literacy" Conference <http://www.speechservicesniagara.ca/en/conference>

Baby Connections (Kim Krueger-Kischak)

- Will have an information booth at the Sept 27th Stork and Stroller Show; developmental evaluation underway should finish by the beginning of November; still working on the new website and database; November 20th Baby Connections facilitator and partner organization meeting

Let's Read and WPL (Laura Dick)

- 2015-16 title is "Big Bear Hug" by Nicholas Oldland ; received TD funding to distribute almost 1,000 copies to families; planning for story walks with student placements from Conestoga College; launching at Word on the Street (WOTS) in Kitchener and International Festival in Cambridge

KPL (Laura Reed)

- Sept 26 WOTS is happening at Kitchener Market (for children and families) and Kitchener City Hall (for adults)

Strong Start (Machelle Denison)

- Letters, Sounds and Words Program is launching; just under 3,000 children participated last year; results are posted on website; hiring instructors and volunteers for Get Ready for School and will be in 16 community centres (four new for this year)

ROW Home Child Care (Joanne Stronge)

- New Child Care Act has rolled out; upgrading all caregivers and staff to standard first aid and current vulnerable sector CRC; changes in ratios with some leeway until 2017; more changes expected (e.g. standardized home inspection by the province)
- KPMG's top cost-efficient recommendations to ROW included the recommendation to close the five directly-operated centres, but not the home child care sites; can call your regional councillor and attend the September 30th meeting to share your opinions on this

Comments from Andrea Siemens

- Andrea is a parent of a child in the regional home child care centres and is the media spokesperson advocating to keep the centres open, more information on the Facebook group called Save Waterloo Region Children's Centres; wishes that ELAWR had already done the advocacy training

LINC (Maria Milne)

- Sites filling up slowly; not many immigrants with lower levels; anticipating higher numbers when Syrian refugees arrive

RWL (Janelle Wenger)

- Programs start at beginning of October
- "Ready, Set, Go, Kindergarten!" was a new four week program in Elmira this summer; moving from a prescribe approach and trying to mesh the JK/SK school approach with the library; will be working with Wilmot Family Resources Centre to offer Family Math at the library in New Hamburg

Public Health (Rebecca Dahle)

- Finding many ways to bring early literacy to the forefront
- Foster parent training, happening in November, to include references to literacy with birth to 12 months (e.g. book reading as part of healthy routines)
- Sleep sessions being developed by ROW PH and will be delivered through the OEYCs, for new parents with babies newborn-12 weeks, focuses on understanding your baby's language and responding to your baby's cues
- Presentation to medical students at McMaster on October 21, 2015 (infant mental health, early years, 18 Well Baby Visits, important to recommend reading)

U of Waterloo (Katherine White and Stephanie Denison)

- New research projects; attending Sept 27th Stork and Stroller Show to promote Lab for Infant Development and Language

Idea Exchange (Jaime Griffis)

- Summer Reading Program focused on reading and talking about reading; Canadian Library Association Intellectual Freedom Community has noted a new trend where some school administrators are censoring what goes into the school libraries based on different levels of readers

Highland Stirling Community Group (Marci Nicolaisen)

- Operates a drop-in program for families three mornings a week; \$10 fee to use lending library

KidsAbility (Gabriele Croft)

- Due to last year's increase in SLP funding (some short-term, some long-term), the waitlist for assessment is now at the 2 month wait point for both under 30 months and over 30 months level.
- Increased some of services to JK aged children with the provision of 8 week treatment blocks (group or individual) for children with a variety of articulation and language needs beyond those who have always been serviced on care paths for JK (e.g. motor speech, fluency, voice disorder, selective mutism). Parent education is built into all the interventions. Deadline for referral of JK children has been extended to January 30th 2016.
- Some of literacy risks of children with Hearing loss, including phonological delays (sound production), morphological delays (grammatical word endings such as plural and possessive "-s", verb tenses ending in "-s" and "-ed"), delays in multi-channel conversations which has a relationship to the development of Theory of Mind for young children. We seem to be identifying children with HL younger, and have some very early Cochlear implant candidates recently (under one year).

- Gabriele and Kim (as ELAWR reps) will be participating in the Speech Services Niagara annual <https://gallery.mailchimp.com/e8c7408fd28657e533ecb7b13/files/LiteracyConfBrchr15w.pdf> conference in a panel discussion about community messaging around early literacy issues.

Project READ (Joanne Davis)

- Will launch Get Set Learn programs the week of October 14th at Mill Courtland Community Centre, Stanley Park Community Centre, and Lings in Cambridge
- Grandparent workshop series offered in partnership with Idea Exchange; PRLN connected with Idea Exchange at the ELAWR table

Early Learning Pedagogy Specialist (Amber Holmes)

- Two year position at Our Place OEYC and funded by the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation; working with staff and families to look at policies and programs and interactions from the perspective of how families learn; will be facilitating the Literacy Café on Relationships on October 29th at Our Place OEYC

WCDSB (Julie Tonin)

- New to the role of Early Learning Consultant; provides professional learning for teachers (connecting with SLPs, accessing resources before there is a crisis, building relationships, using teachers' language as a powerful vehicle); want to address problems in the early years so that they don't continue into later years
8. Next meeting: Tuesday November 24th, from 1:00 to 3:30 at YMCA OEYC at 161 Roger Street in Waterloo: will be optional NutriStep training provided to any interested ELAWR members by Rebecca Dahle (ROW PH) from 12:00 to 1:00 prior to the meeting