Early Childhood Programs Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 2, 2003

Attending:
Dr. Janice Hooks, Chair of Dept. of Early Childhood & Ele. Educ.
Dr. Chhanda Islam, Dept. of Early Childhood & Elem.
Debbie Sisco, Child Care Resource and Referral PADD
Carol Elder, IECE teacher Sedalia Preschool (Graves County)
Teresa Hobbs, IECE teacher Lowes Preschool (Graves County)
Angie Sexton, IECE teacher Lowes Preschool (Graves County)
Courtney Hamby, IECE undergraduate student
Jennifer Washburn, Director IKIDS Child Care Draffenville
Jane Sykes, IECE teacher Hendron-Lone Oak Preschool (McCracken County)
Sue Smith, CDA instructor
Dr. Jo Robertson, Dept. of Early Childhood & Elem.
Dr. Joann Niffenegger, Dept. of Early Childhood & Elem.
Jessica Hobbs, IECE graduate student
Michelle, Little Lakers Family Resource Center (Calloway County) also her
Student social work intern

Faculty attending were introduced and asked to talk about the kinds of courses they teach. Each person in attendance introduced themselves describing their current position or role. Dr. Jo Robertson provided an update on the programs (CDA, AS degree in child development, BS degree in IECE and Master’s degree in IECE) and discussed proposed changes that were made to these programs based on feedback from last year’s meeting. She told about the proposed changes to the IECE undergraduate program and where MSU is in the process of getting these changes approved. A new course has been added to the undergraduate and graduate program *SED 505 SED Procedures and Strategies for IECE based on suggestions from last year. All programs continue to grow. Sue Smith, Jo Robertson, and Joann Niffenegger briefly discussed the programs and pointed out curriculum guides and enrollment and student materials in the handout packets. As lunch was served, Jo Robertson presented questions to committee for feedback.

1. How well do you think we are doing in communicating about availability of early childhood programs at MSU?
Excellent-faculty are knowledgable, kind and available. They are knowledgeable about university and program changes. CDA students are informed about the associate degree and IECE degree. Debbie Sisco talked about child care providers who experience increased self esteem after getting their GED and enrolling in a program at the university. Training has helped to decrease staff turn over in child care and helps providers view early childhood as a profession. Those in attendance indicated they were confident in sending people to faculty. The lack of understanding by the general public about the value of trained early childhood professionals was discussed by the group.
It was suggested that faculty try to work with school districts to disseminate information to teachers and classroom assistants about programs. The group spent some time discussing the requirement that classroom assistants pass a state exam or get a 2 year degree in order to keep their jobs.

Several teachers discussed the need to have a Ph.D. in early childhood available through MSU. While a program exists, it does not focus on early childhood. We also discussed the need to recontact those who earned CDA’s who might need information about how to continue their education.

2. How smooth was the initial enrollment process for you or those you work with? Did you/they understand what you/they needed to do?

Jo asked Joann Niffenegger to discuss handout in packet on who to contact at the university. Information was shared on how to obtain these booklets. Sue Smith has put together a packet of information she shares with potential students. This has been helpful for the nontraditional student coming back to school. There is a good system of collaboration in place between MSU faculty and school districts and community agencies in disseminating information.

Debbie Sisco said that child care providers receiving scholarship money need to know they must enroll at MSU before taking courses. There is still some problems about getting information out about deadlines and who needs to know.

3. How well is information about financial aid being communicated to current or prospective students?

PADD office doing a good job getting information about scholarships out. PADD office faxes list of scholars to financial aid in order to expedite process. Some students have had difficulty in getting purged when they have First Steps trainingship funds. These funds are paid after grades are in and MSU requires students to pay tuition and then they are reimbursed if they have appropriate grade. Similar program available for school district and Head Start teachers from Ky. Dept. of Educ.

4. How convenient are the times early childhood classes are taught?
Fairly convenient although undergraduate working students will reach a point where they have to quit their jobs or work part time in order to take some of the courses offered only during the day. Adding the Friday and Saturday sections of some courses has helped. Teachers said that with school districts staying in session longer, it becomes more difficult to take summer courses. Many courses also use blackboard and provide access to information when teacher are unable to attend a class. Preschool teachers ask us to be flexible and use technology whenever possible. With growing pains in the early childhood programs, it is becoming harder to schedule courses across departments and colleges so there is little overlap. When there is only one section of a course offered and it is offered a particular semester, student need to
know this to plan. Students coming back to school have struggled with how to fit work, family and studying into their schedule.

Another concern raised is that with increased number of students, it is becoming difficulty to get some required courses as classes reach maximum enrollment quickly. Students are concerned that they may have to graduate a semester later than planned because they cannot get into a critical course. Those in attendance urged additional sections or larger classes.

5. How adequate are the resources that are available for early childhood majors?

Resources are available although some part time students might have difficulty locating them. We need to publicize resources. We discussed developing an early childhood web link, and keeping more current information on this web page. We would have to make sure majors know about this resource. Jo and Joann will work with KATE to develop a web page for EC majors.

Those in attendance also identified several community resources available to students such as curriculum materials at the R & R office, public library, some counties have written early childhood grants to set up resources for child care providers. There is also the Early Childhood Regional Training Center on campus that provides materials on loan as well as doing training.

6. What information needs to be added to the program?

More emphasis on children 0-3 years of age. Jo told group about proposed new Infant and Toddler course. More information about how to deliver home based services in undergraduate courses. More opportunities to participate in developing IEP’s and due process. Jo told the group SED 505 was planned to meet this need although it has not been taught due to her current teaching schedule. Jane Sykes suggested that practicum may have a requirement for developing an IEP or IFSP and that this be communicated to supervising teachers. Currently a letter goes to supervising teachers listing student expectations that encourages them to let students sit in on IEP or IFSP. Be sure that courses taken as part of Directors Credential include information about children with disabilities.

One preschool teacher who had recently had difficult experience with IECE student teacher said to make sure students know that teaching in early childhood is hard, a lot of responsibility and makes you tired. The child development center on campus may not be painting a real picture of a classroom due to the number of students participating in the classroom.

It was suggested that a course in grant writing at the graduate level be considered. Also be sure family systems are included in the families class (undergraduate) and parenting/family-partnership course (graduate).
Resources were identified such as the packets developed by Beth Carrico for childcare directors which included a resource directory. Students will have to know how to locate resources for children and families.

Jane Sykes shared a web site with up to date early childhood policies (such as literacy) The group discussed need to prepare students for push toward literacy in appropriate manner.  