

**DATE:** June 23, 2011

**TO:** Children and Families Commission of Orange County

**FROM:** Michael M. Ruane, Executive Director



**SUBJECT:** Consolidation of Commission Sponsored Early Literacy Programs

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**SUMMARY:**

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County identified early literacy as a critical component of school readiness. The Commission funds the Early Literacy Program (ELP) to implement countywide early literacy programs and THINK Together to implement early literacy programs in the Santa Ana community. This report summarizes the early literacy programs supported by the Commission, and recommends consolidating the administration and operations of the programs under the THINK Together management structure.

**Consolidation of Early Literacy Program Management**

As part of the FY 2011-12 Budget actions, the Early Literacy and THINK Together programs were reduced to \$500,000 each, with direction to pursue consolidating the early literacy program management. The Commission funds both the Early Literacy Program (ELP) and THINK Together to implement early literacy programs. Over the last two years, THINK Together has expanded from its after school model and has begun to serve children in the 0-5 age range so they can enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn. Consolidating the early literacy programs under THINK Together is recommended and is consistent with the strategy to consolidate programs under a single management structure to achieve the recently enacted budget reductions for early learning programs.

The Commission currently partners with THINK Together to implement early literacy strategies in the Santa Ana community. THINK Together is a large, effective non-profit organization that has the infrastructure to leverage efficient support to the Commission's early literacy programs. This support includes program management, volunteer recruitment, fund development, human resource management, financial management, and evaluation. THINK Together is the largest after school provider of services to low-income students, and are experts in partnering with school districts and other agencies in a collaborative manner to deliver high quality programs. The Commission has funded PHFE Management Solutions since 2005 as the fiscal agent for the Early Literacy Program.

THINK Together and PHFE Management Solutions have developed a transition plan that will be as seamless as possible to the children, families, and partner agencies. The existing full-time ELP staff will remain in place as will the key advisors to the programs. THINK Together will also pursue expanding and diversifying the financial support for the early literacy programs and increasing volunteer support for the programs.

## **Early Literacy Programs**

The following early literacy programs will continue under the consolidated management structure:

### *A. Reach Out and Read*

Reach Out and Read is a national program that promotes early literacy and school readiness in pediatric offices by giving new books to children and advice to parents on the importance of reading aloud to their children. Commission support will include providing books, trained readers and volunteer readers in the pediatric waiting rooms during peak hours to read to children and model reading aloud to parents. The partnership with the Orange County Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics will continue to support and implement Reach Out and Read at 42 pediatric medical offices throughout Orange County.

### *B. School Based and School Linked Programs*

Raising A Reader is a national book lending program that offers quality books for children to borrow while encouraging parents to read to their children. The program was developed to foster healthy brain development and early literacy skills to prepare young children for school. The Commission will continue to support the program at 22 school district and preschool sites, and seven schools in the Santa Ana Unified School District. In addition, THINK Together adapted the HABLA early literacy program to a center based model at four elementary schools in the Santa Ana Unified School District. The program that began as a home-based program uses activities and books to model and coach parenting techniques to increase verbal interaction and promote child learning and expressive language.

### *C. Community Literacy Programs*

Community literacy programs include annual participation in the national Read for the Record event in October, and the First 5 Regional Early Literacy campaign in November. As well as support to the Early Learning Specialists at each elementary school district to implement promising practices related to early literacy, and collect and distribute books to children to increase the number of parents who read to their children regularly.

## **AmeriCorps Program Support for Early Literacy**

The early literacy programs will be supported by up to 16 AmeriCorps positions that will be transferred from the home-based HABLA program to THINK Together. The term for the AmeriCorps members currently providing services to the HABLA program will end this summer. THINK Together will provide the administrative support and serve as the host for the new AmeriCorps members that will be recruited in July and August and begin their service in September 2011.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:**

This program has been specifically reviewed in relation to the Strategic Plan, and is consistent with all goal areas. This funding is for \$1 million for professional services for the term July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. Funding for this item was approved at \$500,000 for each program in June 2011 and is included in the FY 2011-12 Budget within the Early Learning budget category.

**PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:**

- June 2011 – Approved funding for Early Learning Countywide & Demonstration Programs

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Approve revised Term Sheet for Early Learning Countywide & Demonstration Programs consolidating countywide early literacy program services under Agreement FCI-EL-05 with THINK Together without increasing the total amount approved at the June 2011 meeting.

**ATTACHMENT**

1. Revised Early Learning Countywide & Demonstration Programs Term Sheet

**Contact:** Kelly Pijl

**REVISED EARLY LEARNING COUNTYWIDE & DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS**

<b>Agreement Number</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>	<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>FCI-EL-05</b>	<b>THINK Together</b>	<b>7/1/11 – 6/30/12</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>Early Literacy Programs</b>	<b>Total funding amount includes administrative and program costs for early literacy programs.</b>
<b>FCI-EL-03</b>	<b>PHFE Management Solutions</b>	<b>7/1/11 – 6/30/12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Early Literacy Program Support</b>	<b>Administrative and program costs for the Early Literacy programs consolidated with THINK Together</b>
FCI-EL-01	Boys & Girls Clubs of Garden Grove	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	\$80,400	Readiness on the Road School Readiness Program	Mobile school readiness programs
FCI-SD-17	Newport-Mesa Unified School District	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	\$150,000	LEAPS Special Needs Program	The total agreement for LEAPS is \$150,000. Healthy Children budget supports \$50,000 of the total
FCI-EL-04	Providence Speech & Hearing Center	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	\$50,000	Speech & Language Development Services	Services support early learning programs
FCI-EL-02	Children’s Home Society of California	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	\$25,000	Health and Safety Support to Early Care Providers	Formerly part of the Anaheim Expansion Project collaborative. Services now limited to health and safety support to early care programs
FCI-SSA-09	County of Orange/Social Services Agency	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	\$25,000	County Child Care Coordinator	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County of Orange
TBD	School Districts	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	\$135,000	Early Development Index (EDI)	To be allocated to school districts participating in EDI
C-282	Cinda Muckenthaler/Contracting with Muckenthaler & Associates, Inc.	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	\$125,000	Early Learning Program Management	
C-283	Lisa Burke dba Burke Consulting	7/1/11 – 6/30/12	\$75,000	Early Learning Program Management	\$25,000 Early Learning Budget \$50,000 Strategic Communications Budget
			\$1,665,400	<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	\$50,000 of total from Healthy Children