

**Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council  
 IL Adoption Advisory Council  
 Clocktower Hotel, Rockford Illinois  
 November 20, 2009, 10am – 2:30pm  
 Approved Minutes (by SWFCAC 1/15/10; by AAC 2/5/10)**

<b>PRESENT - SWFCAC</b>	<b>PRESENT - IAAC</b>	<b>ABSENT - IAAC</b>	<b>DCFS STAFF</b>
Mercedes Ball	Donsetta Blakely	Kathy Casey	June Dorn
Angela Barber	Julie Cebulski	DeAudrey Davis	Gwenn Eyer
Gladys Boyd	Claudia Dancy-Davis	Rosa Dust	Ray Gates
Andrew DeLao	Nancy Golden	Julie Fritzler	Matt Grady
Amy Garcia	Tamara Guy	Roman McCray	Eugene Grandbury
Cecil Garner	Ruth Jajko	Dorothy McGhee	Marilyn Green
Valerie Gill-Taylor	Derek Jeske	Kate Monte	Lori Horgan
Robyn Harvey	Betty Johnson	Maripat Oliver	Vanessa James
Birdia Jenkins	James Jones	Judy Pence	Shaun Lane
Sheila Jones	Billie Ray Lewis	Breanne Radtke	Joan Langan
Kay Kizer	Lisa Myles	Michele Seidl	Brad Mansfield
Bill Moorehead	Elizabeth Richmond	Jackie Sharp Akins	Director McEwen
Kim Perez	Pat Kelso Scott	Carol Sheley	Terry McGlothlin
Rolinda Robinson	Karen Wardlaw	Karen Taylor	Steve Minter
Heather Schumacher	Mark Werner	Margaret Vimont	Marsha Northrup
Uli Senz	Linda Wolter	Kim Wheelock	D. Palmer-Thomas
			Jennifer Zaluckyj
<b>ABSENT - SWFCAC</b>	<b>GUESTS</b>		
Royann Garcia	Judge Atchison	Tom Jakeway	
Leanne Montgomery	Judge Doherty	Noelle Seuring	
Steve Steinhardt	Judge Engelsma	Brian Dean Shore	
Patricia Welander	Judge Heaslip	Jerry Welenc	
	Judge Holmgren	Judge Zenoff	

**Hospitality**

Sheila Jones welcomed council members and guests to the meeting and stated that the meeting would be taped to ensure accurate minutes. She asked that cell phones be put on mute and stated that if someone needs to take a call or have a side conversation that he or she should step into the hall so that the meeting could continue smoothly. She said that this is not an “open forum” but rather an agenda-driven meeting.

**Welcome & Introductions**

IAAC Co-Chair Elizabeth Richmond opened the meeting, welcoming everyone and asking them to introduce themselves.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Deaf and Accessibility - Marsha Northrup**

Marsha introduced herself, stating that she used to be a caseworker for DCFS before working in the mental health field, home health care, etc. before returning to the Department. She currently identifies services such as mental health, counseling, and training for deaf and hard of hearing foster children and parents. Services are not currently available in Southern

Illinois, but through the use of video phone and relay technology, services may be provided at a distance. Signing (American Sign Language) skills are very important for counseling deaf children, in order to offer one-to-one communication. Marsha also handles other referral services. She has developed a brochure listing services and rights that Deaf are entitled to. She has applications for free amplified phones available through the Illinois Technology Access Program (ITAP). These are available throughout the state. She indicated that video phones are also great for Deaf children to allow them to communicate freely, learn phone etiquette, etc.

### **Update from Office of Training - Joan Langan**

Home of Relative Training (HMR) - A universal referral form has been created for training and will soon be posted on the D-Net, with 25 sites scheduled for 6-hour trainings statewide. The trainers will still call potential attendees. They're also following up with the participants who have been referred for the DVD training to have them attend in person. In areas where they've had pilots running they've gotten very good feedback. The fingerprinting agency will be attending the HMR trainings to do fingerprinting on site.

CPR Training - They've identified free training for the Cook Institute. She stated that they have identified training resources throughout the state. They're looking for clarification regarding exactly which type of CPR certification they're looking for.

Reunification Training - Joan has reviewed the existing curriculum and feels that it's pretty basic. She believes that the training for caregivers needs to go beyond providing information about the importance of reunification to cover the "how to" of providing reunification activities and completing the paperwork for the special service fees. The key PRIDE competencies used for this training will include supporting relationships, connecting children to lifetime relationships and working as professional team members. They'll identify foster parents who've successfully worked toward reunification to help guide this training. Joan was asked to review the Reunification Handbook that is being developed through the Clinical Division. They would like to roll-out early in 2010.

Educational Advocacy Training - She noted that they are planning to roll out this revised training in February, 2010.

### **Update on KinGap & Other Updates - June Dorn**

Birth Parent Restoration Act - Jim asked June to address the Birth Parent Restoration Act, amending the Adoption Act. June said that DCFS Legal is providing training throughout the state. From the training, she learned that if there was an adoption by a relative and that relative parent has died, this law allows the birth parent to request the right to adopt. They will not qualify for subsidy, but this is a road for birth parents to become parents again.

CCBYS Issue - June addressed this with Deb McCarrell and Christine Feldman and they've arranged to do some joint meetings throughout the state between adoption providers and CCBYS providers from DHS.

KinGap - the Subsidized Guardianship waiver ended 10/31/09 and KinGap opened 11/01/09. (This is still referred to as SG in rule and procedure.) Key differences include the following:

- ❖ KinGap allows for subsidized guardianship primarily with relatives. Those relatives must now be licensed. The child must be in the home for six consecutive months and

the home must be licensed for those same six months. (SG required a one year stay, and homes did not have to be licensed.)

- ❖ There is still a sibling exception, and it is broader than the one with SG. Only one youth must meet the criteria and other sibs may move to guardianship at a different time.
- ❖ Illinois added one more exception: Youth 14 and older may obtain permanency through guardianship with a non-relative. Youth that move to guardianship under this program will be covered through state funds only. They still must meet the six month residency and six month licensure requirements. The sibling placements will not be exceptions in this case.
- ❖ The Emergency Rule was passed last week and will need to be revisited in early 2010.
- ❖ They have launched a KinGap staff training effort, primarily web-based. More than 900 have been trained to date, primarily supervisors.

She noted that there was an influx of SG cases at the end of the waiver.

Post Adoption/Guardianship Handbook - June said a new version is currently available.

Staffing Update - The Cook County Unit has suffered the most, dropping from 30 to 15, primarily due to retirement. They are down from eight to two Office Specialists, and are shifting to the Child Welfare Specialist title. They have gotten approval to post a couple of openings. June's contact information: 312-814-6858, June.Dorn@illinois.gov

### **Adoption Celebration**

Elizabeth asked Lisa Myles to explain the Adoption Celebration program coming up today. Lisa said that tomorrow Rockford will honor up to 40 adoptees and their families at the court house, where judges will conduct adoptions on National Adoption Day, 11/21/09. They will be recognized with certificates and a reception. Derek Jeske, IAAC member and an adult adoptee, will be a featured speaker. Today the council will provide certificates of appreciation to the local judges who support adoption. Bookmarks and copies of the Governor's proclamation were placed at each place setting.

### **Budget Update - Matthew Grady, Deputy Director of Budget and Finance**

Mr. Grady distributed handouts and introduced himself. He reviewed the handout, which was a PowerPoint presentation on the DCFS FY2010 Budget Overview-Challenges & Opportunities.

He said DCFS will get the guidelines for the FY'11 budget on November 25<sup>th</sup>. When asked about the criteria used for consolidating offices, he said they looked at the total number of staff in the office, the total number of families served by the office, and the proximity to the regional office.

### **Introduction of New Service Support Deputy - Shaun Lane**

Jim Jones introduced Shaun Lane as the newly appointed Deputy Director for the Division of Service Support at DCFS. Mr. Lane said he has spent his entire career in child welfare, beginning as a caseworker with Lawrence Hall Youth Services. He worked several years on public policy, and on the formation of the BH Consent Decree and reforms. Recently he has worked on community leadership, and as chief program officer of the Children's Place Association. He said he brings a perspective that is grounded in the interest of children and

families and a passion and commitment to children and families. His specific areas of responsibility will include the offices of Foster Parent Support Services, Administrative Case Review, CAYIT, Training, and the Child Location and Support Unit. He said he looks forward to working in partnership with the councils.

### **Office of Foster Parent Support Services - Ray Gates**

Ray said that the budget for the four training institutes is still intact. There will be four one-day institutes presented, three in March and one in April on Saturdays from 9am-3pm. There is a planning committee, as well as a program committee that is designing the curriculum. In previous years we have had the youth panels, and will continue that this year, followed by the regional administrator, then a presentation on teamwork and how we can better work together to serve children and families. We will utilize some portions of staff teamwork training that has already been delivered to staff. We will use the co-training model with foster parents and staff training together. Details are not determined, but he expects to have them completed by the end of January. Information will be upcoming in the *Illinois Families Now & Forever* newsletter, with a save the date in December and registration information in January.

### **State of the Department / Adoption Month - Director McEwen**

Director McEwen said it is an honor to attend this meeting, which not only marks his anniversary as Director, but also celebrates Adoption Month. He said over 60,000 children are in adoptive placements in Illinois, and we need more resources to support those children.

Office closures - Director McEwen said arguments to keep offices open are all valid, and he cannot justify the closures, but he has no choice but to close those with the least amount of impact on people.

Director McEwen said he made a commitment last year that he would not cut dollars from any place where a child sleeps, such as group homes, residential facilities, ILP, TLP, or foster homes. He will also not cut the \$250 million that go toward adoption subsidies. Cuts will be taken in other areas. He said we cannot rely on tax revenues even if there is a tax increase, because of such a large deficit. We have to focus on revenue generation, and we are striving to maximize every dollar spent by claiming it somewhere.

Differential response - This is an alternate response to always doing investigations. In Illinois we have set up a threshold where with the 20% lowest risk cases we do family assessments as opposed to investigations. Less than 1/2 percent of cases are ever opened from this particular group. These are not the type of cases where you would see a child come into placement. In Illinois because we have done a good job with the risk assessment protocol we have a 20% post investigative services rate, meaning that in only 20% of the cases that we indicate do we open a placement or intact family case. He noted that foster care in Illinois is much smaller with approximately 15,000 kids in care. This creates opportunities for us to look at prevention programming when there is a lower level of risk. There is a difference between abuse and neglect. Abuse is typically intentional, and neglect is often unintended harm. We believe if we have this differential response and use family assessments and protective factors, we can educate families about what we are looking at and how to protect and strengthen the family before anything tragic happens. He asked everyone to become involved in using these protective factors.

Director McEwen said that DCFS submitted a grant to establish a Safe Families program and was picked as one of five finalists. Illinois staff went to Pittsburg to answer questions, and we will be notified on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Governor Quinn signed into legislation the Safe Families program, a law requiring a 5-year project that will start on January 1, 2010. DCFS will still try to move forward with this program even if we do not get the grant. The Safe Families Program has served approximately 800 children this year. Families voluntarily place their children, and the average length of stay is 45 days. Crisis nurseries are threatened in this budget crisis, and all have waiting lists. At a crisis nursery, parents can drop off their kids for 72 hours if they have a crisis going on and don't have the support of families and friends.

Among other early activities to implement the differential response law, the Director asked that foster parents consider helping parents learn the skills necessary to parent their children. He asked the councils to establish a joint committee to consider further how foster and adoptive parents might support families served through differential response in their local communities. He committed to sharing additional information about differential response as the program develops.

This will have very little impact early on. Cases that are high risk where most of our kids come into care will not be eligible for the differential response/family assessment program. A recent study that looks at the school rotational intake program indicated that the area with the highest ratio was Winnebago County with one bed for 56 children coming into care. Foster and adoptive parents are still needed, particularly in that area.

#### **Overview of Winnebago County Adoption Day - Jennifer Zaluckyj**

Jennifer gave a brief background of the adoption day celebration held annually at the Winnebago County Courthouse. This is their sixth year to celebrate, and they will finalize adoptions for 28 children tomorrow, including three over the age of 14, and seven sets of siblings. She introduced the committee members and judges who help with the event.

#### **Awards to Adoption Day Planners & Judges - Director McEwen**

Director McEwen presented certificates of appreciation to each committee member as well as a plaque to be displayed at the court house.

#### **Rule 402 Revisions - Steve Minter**

Steve and Brad Mansfield came to talk about the changes to Rule 402 - 402.7 (non-active status), and 402.8 (water safety and non-smoking).

402.7 non-active status - DCFS has been working on this for two or three years which allows agencies to free up their resources and spend more time with foster parents who are actively fostering. The licensing worker will complete a form that will need to be signed by the foster parent, licensing worker and licensing supervisor. They are still working on the procedure to go along with this. Foster parents can volunteer to place their homes on non-active status for 3-1/2 years, without monitoring visits from workers. Their licenses must be in good standing, and they cannot have any current placements. The 16-hour annual training is still a requirement to maintain the non-active license.

The reactivation process is also in policy. The only thing that would have to take place is a worker visit to the home to assure that everything is as it should be and then the license can be activated. If there is another individual in the home they will have to do a background

check. This is strictly a voluntary process. The purpose is to reward people who have been fostering but just don't want to foster at this time. A study done in 2005 indicated that we are only using about 40% of all licensed homes. This will free up resources for licensing staff to focus on the HMR effort and other licensing issues.

Council members expressed concern about not being contacted when a child that was previously in their home returns to care. Steve said that homes that are on hold are typically shown on the bottom of the list, but it is noted that they are on hold. He said that if workers are aware of the situation, they might call the foster parent even if they are on hold, but they might not, and he did not have any way to control individual situations.

Robyn asked that Steve utilize some of the council members to help develop the procedures. Brad said they could put something in the procedures to explain that this might happen.

Angela said she heard that there was a rule change that requires all licensing visits to be unannounced. Steve was unaware of this rule change. He said if there is a complaint that requires monitoring visits, those can be unannounced. Ruth was in training where that same information was announced. Steve said he will clarify the issue with Virginia York, who is his counterpart to the POS agencies.

Rule 402.8 - This rule requires that all foster parents in homes that have spas and pools must be certified in CPR by January 2010. There are two categories of CPR - infant and adult. How will this be monitored and how will DCFS assist foster parents to be in compliance? Steve said that if training is not readily available, we will not remove the children or place the home on hold at that time. He said to call him if this happens. He said DCFS is trying to get training set up to help foster parents meet the requirement. CPR certification requires refresher training every two years.

Robyn asked that licensing workers inform foster parents who have water on their property. Steve said he will get a memo out to workers instructing them to inform foster parents. (It is also on the licensing worker's checklist.) He will discuss with Virginia to make sure the POS-supervised foster parents are also informed.

No smoking policy - if a child smokes in the home, despite the best efforts of the foster parents to change this behavior, the caseworker should be notified, and notation made in the record, for the foster parent's protection.

Steven's contact #'s: 312-328-2721; cell: 312-485-4984.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Approval of SWFCAC Minutes from 10/16/09 Meeting**

***Birdia Jenkins made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Amy Garcia seconded. Motion carried.***

### **Approval of IAAC Minutes from 10/2/09 Meeting**

***Mark Werner made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Billy Ray Lewis seconded. Motion carried.***

## **Plans for Future Focus/Common Issues & Concerns**

### ***Agenda Items:***

Discuss the need for a will and Power of Attorney regarding birth parents' ability to regain children following the death or incapacity of relative adoptive parents.

The Director needs volunteers to work on differential response. See the council chairs to join this committee.

Tamara suggested that the AAC's Respite Committee join the SWFCAC's Respite Committee and work cooperatively on the issue.

### **Adjourn**

***Birdia Jenkins made a motion to adjourn. Donsetta Blakely seconded. Motion carried.***

The next SWFCAC meeting will be held January 15, 2010, in Lisle.

The next IAAC meeting will be held February 5, 2010, in Bloomington.