

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
Approved MINUTES
January 20, 2006
Eastland Suites Hotel & Conference Center
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff	Guests
Donsetta Blakely Gladys Boyd Raymond Chasteen Claudia Davis Sylvia Flory Ruth Dominguez Ruth Jajko Jim Jones Andrea Miller Leanne Montgomery Andre Robinson Heather Schumacher Uli Senz Antionette Walker Adrienne Welenc Mary White Geraldine Wilson	Cecil Garner Vicky Kline Judith McAtee Ramon Nieves	Gwenn Eyer Ray Gates Edgar Hernandez Jane Kelly Vanessa James Tim Lappin Terry McGlothlin	Cindy Backstein Jerry Welenc

Hospitality

Donsetta Blakely welcomed Council members and guests and announced that the meeting would be recorded (under the Open Meetings Act) to assure accurate minutes.

Welcome and Introductions

Adrienne called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. She welcomed new members Heather Schumacher, Leanne Montgomery and Antionette Walker and stated that Ramon Nieves, another new member was unable to attend today. She welcomed council members, asking each to introduce himself/herself to the council.

- Heather works at Camelot Community Care and has 10 years experience in Child Welfare.
- Antionette has worked in foster care for the past eleven years, starting as a caseworker with VOA, and working up to a supervisory position. She then went to Centers for New Horizons where she served as Program Director. She is a foster/adoptive parent and stated that she enjoys her work in child welfare.
- Leanne said that she has been a foster parent for twelve years and is also an adoptive parent. A full-time mother, she is the vice president of the local foster parent support organization.
- Andre Robinson stated that he is a clinical specialist for the TASC SOC program. He has enjoyed being a foster parent for just over eight years.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes from 11/18/05 Meeting

Council

Adrienne asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the 11/18/05 meeting. Ruth Jajko stated that she did not have any corrections, but questioned the “utilization review” referenced in the last minutes. When she realized that it was different from a recent review recently reported by Peggy Slater at CWAC, Ruth suggested that Peggy be invited to address the SWFCAC.

MOTION: Uli moved to accept the 11/18/05 minutes as written. Claudia seconded. The motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Committee Reports

Adolescent Issues

Andrea Miller

Andrea stated that her understanding is that they have finally sent the Sibling Task Force hearings report to the Governor. She stated that the hearings were done in “fast-forward” and that they were able to compile the hearing comments with comments from others. She indicated that she had not yet received a copy of the hearings report to the Governor, so she did not have any knowledge of the timeline for the next steps. Ray Gates stated that he would ask Michael Byrd for a copy to share with the Council.

Archives

Jerry Welenc had not yet arrived, so Ray Chasteen passed on the report.

Youth Advisory Board Liaisons

Andrea Miller

Andrea stated that she has not received notification of any meetings. Adrienne and Terry pointed out that the meeting dates are listed in the packets today. Terry also included information from the Youth Summit in the packet. Ruth Jajko clarified that the Summit grew out of a workgroup and that she believes that some ongoing subcommittees will come out of the Summit. Adrienne asked Terry to contact Cynthia Moreno for a list of issues to be addressed and perhaps invite her to meet with the Council. Uli reported that the Summit included meetings and discussions with youth where they discussed education, vocational issues, health and well-being. He stated that the purpose was to generate issues for further discussion, and those groups were to submit written reports of their work during the Summit.

AAC/YAB/CWAC/CFS Reports

Bridgette Glickman

Bridgette did not attend, but sent a report that is included in the minutes. Please see the AAC/YAB/CWAC attachment.

System of Care/SASS

Uli Senz

Uli stated that SASS stakeholders met in Joliet and that the group will continue to meet every other month. The overall stakeholders meeting is designed to make decisions on issues the sub-groups work on. (It is a review and decisions group.) The Operations

subgroup finalized transition protocols that were implemented in November. Their next goal is to assess SASS service intensity. (They are waiting for research results from NIU.) Andre' asked for clarification regarding the subcommittee work. Uli explained that under SASS the health service system has been changed to "fee for service." He stated that a lot of the participants in the SASS workgroup are providers. Uli stated that he has been added to another group regarding Community Services Development and described work that subgroup did to define reimbursement methods for Medicaid services. He stated that the potential SWFCAC role in a group like this is that we can ask for services to be covered that may not already be covered, such as respite. Uli stated that for mental health outside foster care people have high praise for Crisis Intervention Teams – police units which guide specialized interventions leading to appropriate mental health placement.

Child Welfare Licensure Board

Uli Senz

The central agenda is the revision of Rule 412. Ruth Jajko stated that someone from CWEL has reported to CWAC and asked about residential licenses. (Discussion has included expanding licensure for residential providers, but no recommendations have been made.) Uli stated that some of their meetings are held on an emergency basis with this small group meeting in response to licensing issues, which might lead to suspension, triggering an OIG investigation. Uli described an actual decision-making situation he'd been involved in regarding suspending a worker's license.

Foster Parent Support Specialists

Vicky Kline

Adrienne reported in Vicky's absence that the plight of the FPSS's has made it to the Statewide Quality Council. She further stated that in addition to losing FPSS's, regions are also losing foster parents. She said that she's heard that contracts are being developed but she has not yet seen anything in writing. Geraldine asked about the number of Support Specialists in Cook South and how their job changed. Adrienne stated that the initial decision was to keep two support specialists and one lead in each region and she clarified the way the specific Support Specialists changed their jobs.

PA92-0295 School Records Act

Ray Chasteen

Ray did not have a report. Council discussion surrounded the issue of having "DCFS" remain on records after a child is adopted and scholarship opportunities available when DCFS is listed on records. Adrienne stated that the education advisors in her office clarify that the DCFS language will stay in school records after adoption because adoptive parents receive board checks and medical cards. Geraldine asked specific questions regarding educational services and scholarships and Adrienne recommended another community scholarship that Geri could follow up on. Ray Chasteen said that many communities offer small scholarships, suggesting that participants check with community organizations and churches for scholarship applications. Andrea stated that she ran into a situation with her son's scholarship. She said that when they received the DCFS Scholarship packet he had already received the MAP grant, and that since the scholarship would bring a tuition and fee waiver they declined the loan so he had to pay out of pocket for some of his expenses. She said that they have now learned that the MAP grant is used for tuition and fees, only, which conflicts with the provisions of the

DCFS scholarship rather than covering housing or other expenses. Heather asked about the possibility of returning the DCFS Scholarship when students accept MAP Grants in order to award to another student and avoid allowing the scholarship to go unused.

Policy Committee

Uli stated that the Policy Committee has focused on planning for the reviews. Adrienne stated that the score sheets need to be revised, reducing inconsistent language, i.e. PRT's and SACY, and she charged the Policy Committee with the revision. Adrienne also stated that we have a discrepancy in agencies with regard to the number of implementation plans submitted per agency and asked that the Policy Committee consider having agencies present multiple implementation plans. She charged them to study the issue and make a recommendation to the Council. Discussion surrounded the low number of current committee members, and Heather and Leanne volunteered to serve on the committee. In addition, the co-chairs will contact Ramon Nieves to solicit his service on this committee. Nancy Thompson will set up conference calls when needed, but they will try to meet in person as much as possible.

Discussion regarding requesting multiple plans for more statewide representation:

- Ray Chasteen stated that service delivery often differs from office to office.
- Andrea stated that it is the agency's responsibility to set up the addresses for the review and suggested that we ask for representatives from multiple field offices to be present at each review in order to get information about those various offices during the review. Ray Gates agreed.
- Ray Chasteen said that in doing the interviews within a single agency or office, interviewers get an overview of the culture within that office.
- Cindy Backstein asked how foster parents impact the scoring of plans and agency reviews. Uli Senz replied that five foster parents per agency are randomly selected for the interviews, which become part of the overall score. Ray Gates stated that foster parents do not have direct impact on review interviews of agency staff within the current framework, and that individual concerns need to be addressed through the Advocacy Office, or through the agency's chain of command.
- Jerry stated that in scoring the implementation plan from DCFS Central Region, he learned that foster parents from the individual field offices had direct input into the plan.

PRESENTATIONS

Draft Policy on Preserving Placements

Edgar Hernandez

- Edgar commented briefly on the organization of the Clinical Division and how he is working toward impacting policy regarding preserving placements for children. He stated that this is not about foster parent "ability," but rather about "early warning and prevention." He summarized some of their goals, stating that in many recent cases the foster parent appeals were upheld because situations were correctable and the foster parents had not been given the opportunity to correct the issues prior to the removal of the child. He stated that one goal is to ask how we can identify issues prior to the 14-day notice, in time to remediate the issues and preserve the placement. He indicated that issues might be around many

common problem areas including illness, plumbing issues, exorbitant heating bills, etc. He also stated that this often affects relative caregivers. He said that the focus had been directed toward older caregivers, but that they are taking it to other levels, also. He stated that he has proposed developing a workgroup with foster parents, case workers, licensing staff, and OIG representatives to try to develop a process that they can all agree on that is supportive rather than punitive. He reported that prevention is the key and that communication underpins the process. Edgar discussed the way he has addressed issues with agencies, sitting down for open discussion to make them aware of their problems, developing clarifying policies and procedures, mentoring, and following up. He stated that once he secures the Deputy's approval he would be back to secure SWFCAC members to serve on this workgroup.

Discussion:

- Mary White asked if he had considered the impact of the lack of Foster Parent Support Specialists on this problem. Edgar indicated that in his prior roles, including caseworker, he was in a position to be in the homes often enough to identify issues and to preserve placements. He indicated that he recognized the importance of the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) role. Members recommended that he openly state his support for the FPSS role in supporting placements.
- Ruth Dominguez stated that another issue to be addressed is foster parents' level of confidence and ability to trust workers enough to be proactive and discuss pending issues before they become huge issues.
- Jim Jones asked Edgar to address patterns and issues that seem to reoccur. Edgar stated that they have acted in response to calls to the Help Unit, foster parent calls, ACR feedback, etc. Edgar generally commented that they could identify relationship problems between workers and foster parents, between workers and court, etc. He stated that some payment issues have been addressed, especially regarding medical issues. He gave an example regarding a situation that happened when a payment was rejected by Medicaid. He said that rather than following up with utilizing external payment sources or going to management, the worker just let it drop rather than following through to secure payment for the foster family. He said that by identifying the issue with the agency they were able to train the worker to go further when faced with a similar situation.
- Uli questioned the lack of supervisory support, which should prevent these issues from arising. Ruth Jajko agreed with Uli that these seem to be supervision and staff training issues. Ruth suggested that Edgar utilize his log to share the breakdowns regarding trends with agency Executive Directors. He stated that he could probably do quarterly reports to share that information with SWFCAC and others.
- Andre' shared a practical way in SOC he was able to follow up with a youth who had dropped out of school, identifying and correcting critical issues within the home, preserving the placement and steering the youth back into school, and now toward college.
- Antionette reinforced concerns around communication between agency staff and foster parents.

- Edgar introduced Jane Kelly and described her current role and her attitude of support of foster parents. Jane stated that she hears and addresses service appeals and that her experience in Northern Region indicates a lack of communication between workers and foster parents. She also indicated that foster parents are not regularly informed upon the placement of an infant for whom the agency is going to aggressively seek reunification or relative placement, and then they are surprised when they receive 14-day notice.

MOTION: Uli moved that we request that Edgar and Jane pull together information regarding the service appeal data in time to provide a summary to SWFCAC Council members two weeks prior to the March 17th SWFCAC meeting. Mary White seconded. Discussion: Edgar stated that he could provide numbers by region, listing the top 20-25 issues that come up for the period July 1 through December 31. **The motion passed by unanimous vote.**

WORKING LUNCH

Training for Implementation Review

Uli, Jerry & Gwenn

Please see attachments for training points.

Assign Teams to conduct Monitoring Reviews

Adrienne Welenc

Please see list in attachments.

Report from the Office of Foster Parent Support

Ray Gates

No report at this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Update on Legislative Efforts

Jerry Welenc

Jerry stated that they're looking for a groundswell of grassroots support for an increased board rate through a letter-writing campaign. Jerry suggested that council members take action as individuals, as foster parent support groups, and as associations, stating that even if the bill does not pass, we can still influence the Governor. Adrienne asked for Council permission to send a letter to all POS agencies and DCFS regions asking them to support the house bill.

MOTION: Mary made the motion to have Adrienne send a letter to all POS agencies and DCFS regions asking them to support the house bill. Ruth Jajko seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Foster Parent Appreciation Month Survey Results

Ruth Jajko

Ruth stated that she summarized the results at the last meeting and indicated that results had been Emailed to members and are included in the packet.

Council Members Assignment to Present at the Caregiver Institutes

Gwenn Eyer

Rend Lake: Vicky Kline

Springfield Region: Andrea Miller

Champaign Region: Andrea Miller
Fairview Heights: Claudia Dancy-Davis
Cook Region/Emerald: Sylvia Flory
Cook Region/Indiana: Uli Senz
Rockford Region: Judy McAtee
Peoria Region: Mary White
Aurora Region: Ruth Jajko

Gwenn stated that she's still waiting for one bio for the training institutes program book.

Update on Implementation Plan Process

Statewide members have scored and returned score sheets for 58/75 plans. Gwenn has scored 56 plans. Jerry has scored 34 plans. We have one plan to reassign, so Gwenn asked for a volunteer to score one plan. With that exception, every plan has been assigned and members seem to be on target for scoring every plan by the end of January.

MOTION: Mary White made the motion to adjourn. Donsetta Blakely seconded. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Agency Name	Region	Lead	Partner
ALLENDALE ASSOCIATION	Northern	Uli Senz	Jerry Welenc
ALLIANCE HUMAN SERVICES, INC	Southern	Vicky Kline	Claudia Davis
ARDEN SHORE CHILD AND FAMILY SVCS	Northern	Uli Senz	Heather Schumacher
ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF CHICAGO	Cook Central	Uli Senz	Ruth Dominguez
AUNT MARTHAS YOUTH SVC CTR INC	Northern	Gladys Boyd	Jerry Welenc
BABY FOLD	Central	Andrea Miller	Leanne Montgomery
CAMELOT COMMUNITY CARE INC	Central	Ruth Jajko	Jim Jones
CASA CENTRAL SOCIAL SERVICES	Cook South	Sylvia Flory	Ruth Dominguez
CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE SPF	Central	Andrea Miller	Leanne Montgomery
CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ROCKFORD	Northern	Ray Chasteen	Ramon Nieves
CENTERS FOR NEW HORIZONS (F)	Cook Central	Geraldine Wilson	Andre Robinson
CHADDOCK	Central	Uli Senz	Mary White
CHICAGO CHILD CARE SOCIETY	Cook South	Adrienne Welenc	Donsetta Blakely
GENERATIONS COMMUNITY SVCS (F)	Cook South	Donsetta Blakely	Andre Robinson
GUARDIAN ANGEL HOME	Northern	Ray Chasteen	Ramon Nieves
HAMDARD CENTER	Northern	Judy McAtee	Jerry Welenc
HOBBY HORSE HOUSE INC	Central	Vicky Kline	Claudia Davis
ILLINOIS YOUTH ADVOCATE PROG, INC.	Cook South	Gladys Boyd	Heather Schumacher
KEMMERER VILLAGE	Central	Mary White	Andre Robinson
KIDS HOPE UNITED	Cook North	Ruth Jajko	Heather Schumacher
LAKESIDE COMMUNITY COMM	Cook North	Donsetta Blakely	Adrienne Welenc
LAWRENCE HALL YOUTH SERVICES	Cook North	Geraldine Wilson	Antionette Walker
RUTLEDGE YOUTH FOUNDATION, INC.	Central	Andrea Miller	Leanne Montgomery
SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE, ILLINOIS	Cook Central	Judy McAtee	Cecil Garner
SULLIVAN HOUSE INC	Cook South	Donsetta Blakely	Cecil Garner
UHLICH CHILDRENS ADVANTAGE NTRK	Cook North	Andre Robinson	Jerry Welenc
VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA	Cook Central	Sylvia Flory	Jim Jones
YOUTH OUTREACH SERVICES	Cook Central	Adrienne Welenc	Ruth Dominguez
DCFS CENTRAL	Central	Vicky Kline	Claudia Davis
DCFS NORTHERN	Northern	Ruth Jajko	Antionette Walker