

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
April 22, 2005, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn Express
411 South Larkin, Joliet, Illinois
Approved MINUTES

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff	Guests
Donsetta Blakely	Carolyn DePalma	Janise Alston	Adrienne Fleming
Gladys Boyd	Geraldine Wilson	Cindy Brunger	Jan Oldham
Ray Chasteen		Mary Dyer	Jan Patrick
Claudia Davis		Gwenn Eyer	Jerry Welenc
Heidi Darville		Ray Gate	Carla Williams
Sylvia Flory		Gayle Hansen	
Ruth Jajko		Vanessa James	
Jim Jones		Diane Jackson	
Vicky Kline		Jean Maher	
Erma Lee		Terry McGlothlin	
Andrea Miller		Debbie Palmer-Thomas	
Judith McAtee		Judy Pence	
Uli Senz		Lynda Petrick	
Adrienne Welenc		Ambie Tolley	
Mary White		Donna Vandenmark	
		Dick Winkler	
		Bob Woodrum	

8:30 a.m. Hospitality - Donsetta Blakely

9:00 a.m. Welcome & Introductions - Adrienne Welenc

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes from 2/25/05 Meeting - Adrienne Welenc

Claudia made the motion to approve the minutes, Erma seconded and the motion passed.

Administrative Business/Final Reports to Director - Adrienne Welenc

There was no administrative business, nor were there any final reports to the Director.

Committee Reports:

***Policy Committee - Jerry, Heidi, Uli**

Heidi stated that the Policy Committee had a lengthy meeting. They determined that there is a need to get together with the agency Foster Parent Law liaisons to talk about what we need to see in the Annual Report, explaining where we are in the review process, and the fact that the Foster Parent Law needs to be a living document used in day-to-day practice. The committee addressed possible methods regarding streamlining the scoring process, and whether we still need to score plans on an annual basis. (Based on statute, each plan must be scored.)

- More emphasis will be placed on the Annual Report and including solid information in the report.
- The committee recommended that plans be scored in group settings rather than individually.

- Ray Chasteen stated that there is a high value in scoring together, but that there needs to be more continuity in having one person manage every scoring session in order to be more consistent in our scoring approach.
- Mary White stated that she would recommend that we require input from different DCFS field offices rather than collecting only one plan from each.
- Ruth Jajko suggested that moving agency reviews from site to site might address that issue.
- Sylvia stated that the committee should consider requiring the larger agencies/regions to submit more than one plan.
- Heidid said that the last page of the score sheet is subjective and the scores for these items may change from year to year.
- Ray Gates stated that six awards would be presented at our annual ceremony with the Director because there was a tie for fifth place.
- The Policy Committee will meet again to update the review training guidelines and style sheet and to discuss trainings for the foster parent law liaisons.

***Adolescent Issues - Andrea Miller**

Andrea spoke briefly about the call she received from Gayle Hansen regarding the sexual abuse training. Andrea had requested the opportunity to speak with Gayle regarding the portion of the training Andrea reviewed materials for. (There was no intention to exclude SWFCAC from the second part of the review – reviewing the actual trainings. There may have been an oversight in terms of them wanting to move quickly into the rollout phase.) Ray Gates and Judy McAtee attended the rollout training in the Northern Region and Heidi Darville and Ruth Jajko attended in Cook. There were some early conflicts regarding registration because there had not been clarity in their roles as SWFCAC members. Heidi's comments to the writing team were that the policy needs to be shared with SWFCAC and they need to have clarity regarding the way children may be referred to the program. She explained that a detailed document needs to be completed prior to referral. Heidi also mentioned that in contrast to the old SACY program they may now be minimizing the experience of children and the impact on future behavior. Heidi stated that there may need to be better supports for those children and youth.

The Adolescent Issues Subcommittee had previously been assigned to cover issues related to the Children & Youth with Sexual Abuse.

***Archives - Ray Chasteen**

Jerry Welenc reported that many great materials have been received from Joanne Flaherty, including a picture of the Governor signing the Foster Parent Law. Additional materials are coming in and the committee has a plan to do the work, and a tentative design for the final product. Ray Gates received materials from Cyd Runde and has forwarded them to the committee. This committee can use more volunteers. Ray Gates suggested that we standardize the archives of *Fostering Illinois* and *Illinois Families Now and Forever*. Ray asked Jean Maher to check with management to see if the Training Office would create an archive file for this publication

***Youth Advisory Board Liaisons - Andrea Miller**

Andrea had planned to update the Council on the Sibling Rights Task Force. Some council members attended a hearing and indicated that there were only a total of 30-40 people in attendance. Uli stated that the youth gave their testimonies and one person testified against the bill.

The other meetings will be postponed perhaps until December. The YAB will meet May 14-16, 2005. Ray Gates suggested that we plan the joint meeting with the YAB and Adrienne indicated that we need to wait until their officers have been elected. Janise stated that she had already been working with Terry McGlothin regarding Council schedules to begin tentatively planning the joint meeting. Heidi questioned how the agenda would be developed, and Adrienne described the way it worked last year and the cooperative way the leadership developed a joint agenda for that meeting.

***System of Care/SASS**

Claudia Davis was unable to attend the last meeting. Uli attended and reported to the Council that the major movement currently is that the role of CARES is being modified. CARES will be the central point of access but will no longer make determination of clinical eligibility. Another big concern is over which SASS provider is responsible for the care of the child. A lot of children and youth have to be screened outside of their home area. The primary SASS responsible is the home SASS, but the screening SASS at the hospital will still be in the plan. (In the ideal world the screening SASS will not make final decisions without contacting the home SASS because the home SASS knows the availability of resources available for the child.) The home SASS will do the follow-up care.

***FPSS - Vicky Kline**

Vicki's last conference call was February 7th, and she distributed minutes from that call at the last meeting. She stated that points that were identified during the call as "will be done" have not been done. There were supposed to be two conference calls, one upstate and one downstate, and these calls have not been held. Vicki has communicated with Larry one time, but no one has followed up on anything. She stated that there are rumors about contract amounts, but nothing has been stated openly. Currently FPSS's are "putting out fires" – they are crisis-oriented and not working with retention or other support issues.

- Mary White suggested that her region forego their annual Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner and utilize those funds to support the FPSS program.
- Ray Gates stated that he has been working with top management to emphasize the importance of offering special recognition for foster parents during Foster Parent Month. Diane Jackson, Deputy Director of Communications, our lunch speaker today, will address plans that are being made for Foster Parent Month celebrations and recognition and ask for the council's input.
- Regional Administrator Debbie Palmer-Thomas expressed that her region surveys indicate that their parents are looking for more family-oriented activities than the parent dinners.
- Adrienne stated that Vicki needs to contact Arthur, Ray and Val Davis to request that they follow up on the issues to be addressed.

***PA92-0295 Records to Schools - Ray Chasteen**

Ray Chasteen has received reports from Donsetta and Mary and he has done some interviews, but they are not yet compiled. He would like to cover all the points on the suggested number of questions and has asked those interested in interviewing to get their results to him via Email within two weeks. Upon receipt, Ray will do a summary report. Donsetta stated that with regard to school records no focus is placed on the perpetrator – she indicated that the focus is totally on the victim. Adrienne stated that it is currently possible for the victim and the perpetrator to attend the same school. She stated that there are discrepancies in the way law enforcement handles the

issues, particularly with non-wards. Vanessa James recounted a news article that she had forwarded to Ray Gates expressing public outcry and perhaps pending legislation regarding the need for more openness in disclosing information.

Clothing Voucher Meeting - Heidi Darville/Donsetta Blakely

Heidi reported that several were present during the discussion of clothing vouchers. Private agencies are providing vouchers that after use may not be fully reimbursable through the Department because foster parents are not providing receipts or are not purchasing reimbursable items, so POS agencies are losing money.

- Ray Gates stated that he'd asked Barb Piwowarski to develop a system similar to the way the POS agencies do the vouchers. We're looking for a means to make it equitable for everyone. Ray also asked about using the debit card method. Barb says from her standpoint we really can't go that way because it puts the money out there before it's spent. Ray stated that the idea that Barb has is to change the DCFS system so that foster parents get authorization from the Department to go out and spend a set amount of money on clothing for a child and then they will be reimbursed on their following board check. Ray suggested the possibility of using a two-part system so that those foster parents who are willing and able to do that may do so, but those who will or cannot could still use vouchers.
- Uli stated that the private agencies can require receipts be provided prior to the first board check or the funds will be deducted from the check.
- Andrea stated that sometimes if you go to the agency beforehand you can get a letter from the agency with their tax exempt number to use when you shop.
- Janise asked about collaborating with public aid to develop a method similar to the method used to purchase food with LINK. The LINK card restricts purchase of inappropriate items.
- Adrienne stated that the Council will continue to pursue this topic.

AAC/YAB/CWAC Reports - Janise Alston

Youth Advisory Board – Their next meeting date is May 14-16. Outsiders are welcome to participate on Saturday. Dondieneita Fleary-Simmons will be on the agenda to talk about the changes in the ILO and TLP programs. She's seeking feedback from the board. The sibling rights resolution meeting included comments from a birth parent who shared her concerns about the impact of adoption on her children's visiting plans. Janise recommended that everyone participate when the meetings are rescheduled. The youth are pressing forward with the Emancipation Portfolio and want to have it become a part of the Ansell Casey Assessment. Janise will work with the new YAB leaders and the SWFCAC Chair to set a date and an agenda for a joint meeting.

Adoption Advisory Council – Some IAAC members attended the hearings and testified as private citizens.

Confidential Intermediary Advisory Council (CIAC) – They cancelled the April meeting and rescheduled for July. They're seeking birth parents who have attempted/completed a search.

Children and Family Services Advisory Council – Cheryl Peterson is the chairperson and has for many years been managed under DCP. This group advises Intact Family Services, DCP and Juvenile Justice. Members have to be appointed by the legislature, so some spots are not filled. The Juvenile Justice Act manages the grant that they get for front-end services.

CWAC – Their last meeting was held at Kaleidoscope. Director Samuels updated CWAC on the DCFS budget – no change...no money. He stated that DCFS is holding its own budget-wise and

that we have maintained our budget. CWAC discussed the Child and Youth Investment Programs. The training calendar for Purchase of Service agencies has been successful, but with SACWIS implementation it has slowed down. Their next meeting is in Springfield May 25th.

Training – Jean Maher

Overall the evaluations from the first Caregiver's Institute (held in Cook County) were very positive. Nearly 100 people attended, including caregivers, staff and presenters. The workshop content was very well received and caregivers felt like they walked away with better information and they liked the format.

- Ray Gates thanked Adrienne Welenc and Donsetta Blakely for providing the terrific breakfast for the day and staying to staff lunch. He recognized the conference staff and other planning committee members, thanking them for their work. Ray recalled very positive comments he heard at the Institute. Three other Institutes are planned, and we are still marketing them to caregivers in other regions.

NEW BUSINESS

Licensing Office Update - Lynda Petrick

Lynda offered Steve Minter's regrets – he was unable to attend due to a family emergency. Lynda reported on the 402 Committee, and indicated that they have been meeting in Springfield. This is a staff committee but Adrienne stated that foster parents have been included in the past. Lynda indicated that they'd welcome a volunteer for the committee. Ruth Jajko, Heidi Darville, Donsetta Blakely and Vicki Kline volunteered for the committee. The committee is going through DCFS Rule in regard to licensing procedures, focusing on very specific tasks to try to make recommendations prior to June 1st.

- Heidi asked Lynda to explain how this committee originated. Lynda stated that it came from the foster care licensing reorganization.
- The next meeting is at 10:00 a.m. April 27th at the DCFS field office at 521 South 11th in Springfield.

The issues to be addressed include the following:

- The State Employee issue – inability to license state employees, yet there is no statement regarding POS staff licensure.
- Hot water temperature issue – many of the committee members feel like we've had foster parents become very disgruntled because they cannot meet the temperature requirement. The committee recognizes a safety issue, but is looking at perhaps increasing the maximum temperature level allowed. (They are working with the safety procedures to perhaps address this issue in a different way.)
 - Vanessa James stated that she would like to do an article in *Illinois Families Now and Forever* regarding this issue.
- The committee is concerned that 402 is not quite specific enough/directed enough for foster parents.
- There is also discussion regarding licensing homes for "0" capacity. This sometimes happens when homes are at capacity but foster parents consider the possibility of another sibling being born that they will want to foster in the future.
- They're looking at the issue of swimming pools and ponds, but there is no consensus regarding the need for further safety regulations.
- There is a need to drop from the rule the definition for Child Care Assistance.
- Ray suggested that this committee link up with the Child Death Review Teams and suggested

that the State of Missouri has a great method for promoting information regarding deaths from drowning in pools and ponds.

- Heidi addressed the issue of the utilization of licensed homes, the number who have not taken a placement in some time, and ways to increase utilization. Lynda stated that it's very hard to track the data, but that Steve's been working on data collection and surveying to find out why homes are not being utilized.

12:00 noon Working Lunch - Foster Parent Appreciation Month - Diane Jackson

Diane recapped the responsibility her division has for all internal and external communication under DCFS. Their role is to really help positively shape the image and put out key messages about what DCFS is all about. She indicated that they are often in a reactive mode, but that her intent is to take a proactive approach as to how we're portrayed and how we uplift the various entities within the Department. She stated that foster parents are very much at the crux of what DCFS is all about. In the months since she last visited the Council her division has worked to leverage the good news about what's going on in the Department, including Adoption Month activities, Child Abuse Prevention Month, etc. They've gotten some good publicity around various events held early in the month of April. They're working with media advisory and press initiatives. Vanessa will include the Governor's proclamation in *Illinois Families Now & Forever*. Diane distributed posters, bookmarks and cards that were designed to celebrate Foster Parent Month. The "tool kit" and other materials are designed for community use to raise the profile of foster parenting. She stated that although the materials have not yet been produced in Spanish they will be by next week. They are also looking for ways the Department can leverage events. Diane Jackson's phone number is 312/814-8436. Diane requested input from the Council regarding the materials and also asked about special events that are being planned for celebration Foster Parent Month. The following events were mentioned during the meeting:

- 15th annual Walk in Rockford
- Erma is going to an appreciation dinner on Saturday
- Child Serv is having their annual foster parent appreciation banquet on Monday May 16th
- LSSI will have a banquet May 24th
- DCFS Bloomington banquet in May
- LCFS is hosting its Annual Conference including lunch on May 19th
- Cook Central 3518 West Division – the event the fourth Tuesday in May will have a banquet with a choir
- DCFS Kankakee will invite judges and others in the community to purchase childrens' books/parenting videos to donate to the local library in honor of Foster Parent Appreciation Month.
- Erma questioned whether we could use the foster parent dinners as ways to bring in/bring back foster parents who are being underutilized. (Mary Sue Morsch is conducting a survey to determine utilization of foster homes and reasons why homes are not being utilized.)
- Additional copies of the promotional materials can be obtained by contacting Deb Smith in the DCFS Office of Communications at 217/785-1700.
- Jean Maher and Ruth Jajko will develop a survey for foster parents asking what type of event they would like to see for Foster Parent Appreciation Month. Jean will also add questions about what kind of training would be helpful to them. The survey will be distributed to foster parents at trainings around the state.

Sexual Abuse Training - Gayle Hansen

Gayle Hansen said that three years ago in July they were requested to put together a training program to replace the old SACY program. They not only developed a one-of-a-kind curriculum, but also redid treatment standards for youth now referred to as Children and Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems. They have redeveloped procedure 302 in regard to the handling, processing and steps involved in processing DCP issues such as supervision plans, etc. They've updated treatment standards, revamped the program plan, and developed a training curriculum for foster parents and staff. They have revised all the pieces in an effort to promote standardization. They recently did two pilot training programs, one in Rockford and another in Cook South. Gayle distributed handouts and described the team-training process. She indicated that the training pilots went very well. There are no new training dates scheduled at this time. They're still reviewing the training and are determining whether to make it a web-based training. It is on hold. Ray Gates said he would check with Velma regarding when it would move forward.

- Jean Maher asked if people can directly contact the Sexual Abuse Coordinators with input and Gayle said, "Yes."
- Gayle thanked the SWFCAC for pushing them to work through this project.
- Jerry Welenc suggested that we consider utilizing this training as part of the 2006 Caregiver Institutes. Ray Gates stated that perhaps Dick and Ambie could do a workshop at each one.

Youth In College - Cindy Brunger

Cindy reviewed the Youth in College program, and provided handouts regarding the services offered. She stated that services may be maintained into a youth's early 20's in many circumstances. Cindy highly recommended the Community College program to prepare youth for college or for the workforce. Janise mentioned that out-of-state students would lose the medical card benefits, but other members suggested that there is reciprocity with other states. Cindy focused on the foster parents' responsibility to support youth in making higher education decisions, particularly looking at financial opportunities and constraints. She encouraged families to visit different programs with their youth. She also addressed the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program that covers youth if they went into guardianship or adoption after the age of 16. They can use the funds in one lump sum, or they can split it up and use it over multiple semesters for tuition, books, uniforms, supplies, vocational tools, etc. The Youth in College workgroup wants to streamline the application process and are trying to get caseworkers and caregivers more involved earlier on. The new application draft will be a two-part application with the caseworker filling out one page and the youth filling out other sheets including a service agreement which treats youth as adults and stresses their personal responsibility to follow through. They are going to make the recommendation that students who are meeting the minimum hours during the school year will not have to attend summer school if they are working in some kind of internship or other vocational program. Another recommendation is that there is a formal meeting held on an annual basis beginning at age 16 to assist youth and caregivers in understanding the impact of educational and other behavior on future educational financial opportunities. The Council requested additional information. Cindy stated that we could call with questions at 312/814-1225.

Erma stated that if students have a “C” average they need additional supports and that the programs should offer a backup for youth who fall short – a number to call, methods they could use to improve. She also suggested that students be prepared to make the choice to drop classes rather than to fail.

Andrea asked if DCFS scholarships were slotted by region, and Cindy said that there are no such allotments.

Jerry Welenc asked about how POS agencies are brought into the scholarship process. Cindy stated that they are somewhat limited at this time because they don’t get timely communication. However, the committee is aware of the need to do more outreach to POS agencies in helping them to be more involved. Jerry referred to the *Crossroads* publication which needs to be revised for more practical use by foster parents.

Adoption Preservation Services Available - Judy Pence

Adoption Preservation programs are designed to keep children in the home. (Respite is not one of the components of Adoption Preservation.) Adoption Preservation is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, with people on call to their existing clients. However, a family wishing to make a referral might not hear back until the next day. The program plan lists pertinent definitions, age restrictions, etc. Workers typically manage 10-12 families. In many agencies there are waiting lists and they recognize that it is not possible to serve every family. (They are able to provide other resources and have ongoing weekly contact until the case can move from the waiting list.) The handouts describe the “no-decline” criteria so agencies cannot turn the family down, although families are not forced to participate since it is a voluntary program. DCFS and POS families are eligible for preservation services. Exclusions are listed in the handouts. 1020 families were served last year. ISU research supports the effectiveness of the program.

- Uli asked whether the FCS programs are adoption preservation programs. Judy stated that they are adoption programs but are not preservation programs. Uli’s concern is that so much of the funding went into the adoption arena. Judy stressed that the programs Uli referenced will in FY ’06 be using the same agencies but with a standardized program plan that addresses the way they provide all services, but particularly respite programs. She mentioned that there is also a respite program through a federal grant operating in four-five sites throughout the state, but that program will end this year.
- Andrea asked if there was any way to increase the number of providers. Judy replied that they continue to seek additional funding, but that it takes a few years to get agencies up to speed in providing top-of-the-line adoption preservation services.

Out of State Use of Medical Cards - Bob Woodrum

Bob distributed and reviewed handouts describing the three processes for wards to be covered when moving out-of-state

- If Title IV-E Eligible (via Social Security Act) in Illinois, they’re automatically eligible out of state. Bob’s office sends the first letter in the packet to the foster parents.
- If not Title IV-E Eligible (via Social Security Act) in Illinois, the foster parents receive the

second two letters instructing them to register as Public Aid enrolled providers and they will work directly with Public Aid.

- The third option is to just send the bills back to Illinois for reimbursement.
- Jerry asked what to do when families travel, and Bob stated that the best thing to do is to take the name of the medical liaison.
- Andrea asked how this is different from the subsidy-provided medical card, and Bob stated that the difference is that the card comes through Interstate Compact rather than the Office of Federal Financial Participation.
- Adrienne asked about what happened when a child came into Illinois in an adoption arrangement from another state and Bob said that the child would have to be IV-E eligible in the other state in order to be eligible for the medical card in Illinois.
- Bob's phone number is 217/785-2548. The medical card hotline number is 800/228-6533.
- Andrea asked about her own experience when a child went to the emergency room. In this case Medicaid paid the hospital bill but the doctor wasn't a Medicaid provider and Andrea paid the difference in the amount that was charged. Bob stated that with a receipt she could be reimbursed for her payment.

Appoint Nominating Committee - Adrienne Welenc

Vicki Kline will serve as chair of the Nominating Committee. Heidi Darville and Judy McAtee will serve on the committee.

Next Meeting/Agenda

Director's Awards to Top 5 Agencies

Election of New Officers for FY'06

Set new meeting schedule

Adjourn

Heidi Darville made a motion to adjourn. Uli Senz seconded. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3pm.