

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
September 10, 2004
Holiday Inn City Centre, Peoria, IL
3:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Minutes
(Accepted as Amended on 10/29/04)

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff	Guests
Boyd, Gladys Chasteen, Ray Darville, Heidi Davis, Claudia Florey, Sylvia Jones, James Kazaras, Ellen Kline, Vicky McAtee, Judith Miller, Andrea Senz, Uli Stone, Linda Welenc, Adrienne White, Mary Wilson, Geraldine	Blakely, Donsetta Edwards, Faye Jajko, Ruth Lane, James Lee, Erma	Byrd, Michael Chasey, Larry Davis, Valerie Eyer, Gwenn Gates, Ray Hansen, Gayle Ingram, Andrea Kennedy, Deb Maher, Jean McGlothlin, Terry Pender, Kareem Petrick, Lynda Richmond, Elizabeth Rogers, Leshonda Williams, Velma Winkler, Richard	Atlas, William Austin, Bryan Barkus, Samantha Baron-Jeffrey, Angela Baron-Jeffrey, Michael Bobs, Demetrius Boyd, Regina Davis, Chantell Harvey, Jeremy Hunter, Senator Mattie Illa, Ricky Jones, Richelda Lopez, Karina Loy, Don Loy, Joyce McLaughlin, Betty Mohring, Mallory Thomas, Armond Welenc, Jerry

WELCOME

Adrienne Welenc, chair, opened the meeting, welcoming members and guests.

FY '05 Conference Status & Foster Parent Training - Velma Williams

Deputy Director Velma Williams addressed how the FY '05 budget cuts would impact the Department's ability to provide training and conferences. There was a significant reduction in the training budget, resulting in many cuts, including the African American, Hispanic, Caregiver and any other conferences.

Velma said the key issue that she had addressed with the Director was how we can provide learning opportunities for staff and foster parents with limited dollars. She stated that we have a limited number of dollars to support other kinds of one-day, region-based or downstate institutes and one-day institutes in Cook County. The plan is to establish a group of foster parents and adoptive parents to work with training staff to begin to plan ways to use the limited money available, i.e. DCFS can provide a speaker, we would need to find meeting space at no cost, and we'll use training and communication resources to print materials to promote the training. The goal is to use Department resources to support learning opportunities. This plan applies to all conferences for FY '05.

Velma said we also want to provide opportunities for foster & adoptive parents to take advantage of other conferences outside DCFS. The Department can no longer support other conferences financially, but will cover a limited number of slots to send parents and staff to conferences sponsored by other entities. Director Samuels has asked for a plan regarding what kind of institutes we can plan for the foster families to attend. We are trying to be creative to provide opportunities for people to go and learn.

SWFCAC members were asked to volunteer to serve on a committee to plan the institutes. Jean Maher and Terry McGlothlin will co-chair the committee. Adrienne Welenc volunteered to serve on the committee.

Adrienne asked about the Department's statutory requirement to provide internet-based interactive training for foster parents. Jean Maher addressed the availability of Web-based seminars. The Department is planning to use technology to produce web-based training. Adrienne asked for further information on this training by the next meeting.

Further discussion addressed ways we are going to utilize the National Resource Center and other organizations. The Administration for Children & Families (ACF) has usually provided 12 free experts to come out and do presentations, but they're not sure they'll be able to continue to do that. We plan to now use local experts and regional sites to provide institutes rich in information while not taking people too far from home. People will not have the same opportunity to network, but if we need to make this change for one year, we want to make it as rich an experience as possible.

Jean Maher discussed the availability of pre-service and in-service training. There's limited PRIDE pre-service in every part of the state with the exception of Carbondale, and they anticipate a full schedule by the first of October. All training will be limited, focusing on pre-service and educational advocacy, using money that is left to provide modules. We are working to coordinate between the regions to share resources when possible and to promote online training through Adoption Learning Partners and Lending Library options. They're using the *Illinois Families Now & Forever* newsletter to promote these programs.

Update on Sexual Abuse Training-Children & Youth With Sexual Behavior Problems (CYSBP) - Gayle Hansen and Dick Winkler

- Sent around copies of the draft training implementation plan
- They have completed 6 of 7 training modules
- Training has been sent for review and comments/feedback have been received
- Pilot training may be in place as early as November, but they plan to at least have it set for pilot in January in the Northern Region (Rockford) and Cook South
- This training dovetails updated standards, updated forms and an updated approach – it's been approved by the Child Welfare Advisory Committee and will now go to Policy and Procedure before going to the Director
- Adrienne requested that the Council receive a copy of the draft standards so that we can be "less reactive." Velma stated that they anticipated that the standards

would be out in final form within the next six weeks. Gayle said that if we have comments they must be submitted to her as soon as possible.

Dick asked for assistance as to how to possibly utilize a grant from the Juvenile Justice Foundation. Gayle said that Cheryl Peterson contacted her regarding the grant, and they need to write a proposal regarding how to best spend the money. The total grant is \$20,000, but they are unsure how much of it they'll get.

Suggestions include the following:

- Gayle stated that a one-day training with State's Attorneys or with judges would be beneficial.
- Great opportunity to do co-training with foster parents, staff, court judges, etc
- Include mileage and childcare for those who require it.
- If you're doing it in an office, offer refreshments - boxed lunches
- If you're doing it regionally you won't have much mileage reimbursement
- Videotape the training and make available through the Lending Library (Dick stated that a problem would be that the proposed training is very interactive.)

This issue was added to the responsibilities for the one-day institute planning committee.

Uli stated that there is a practice vacuum between SACY and CYSBP. Gayle stated that we need to educate staff to get them on board with current practice. Schools will also need to be educated regarding terminology and practice.

Clinical Issues of Expanded Capacity - Gayle Hansen

- In preparation, Gayle pulled the policy guide, policy transmittals, and information from Rule & Procedure and Northern Region's protocol.
- Every region has a different protocol. What we need to do is to collapse it into one unit so that we always use a single protocol.
- Expanding capacity can be determined clinically following prescribed steps: Clinical gets referral from the Director's Office. They work with Licensing, depending on what category it falls into.
- We are trying to establish a protocol for implementation statewide. When it's ready Gayle will let the Council know.

Velma stated that they would put the issue back on the agenda for the next meeting.

Report from Director Samuels - Andrea Ingram for Director Bryan Samuels

- Expressed his regret that he could not be here this afternoon. He had tried to rearrange his schedule, but had a special invitation to meet with congressional members in Washington, DC about child welfare.
- Addressed the budget and the methodology employed in developing the budget
 - o Objective – Reduce spending in a way that will ultimately strengthen the system.
 - Do it in a way that does not undermine future directions.
 - Ended up taking a cut of approximately 78 million dollars.

- Additional expenses came in that were not appropriated (i.e. Union negotiations; Spec. Care, etc.)
- Analyzed places where they could squeeze out money by taking the budget down to the actual spending
- Addressed the residential cut in that context – needed to face getting utilization capacity in line with declining utilization, length of stay, etc.
- Guidelines Utilized
 - Focused on markers - putting quality over quantity
 - Focused on preventing crisis rather than having to respond to crisis
 - Focused on building bridges to communities
 - Focused on investing in the brighter future of kids. We not only worry about safety, but focus also on well-being, education and safety when they leave our care.
 - Focused on building accountability
- Steps Taken
 - Bringing appropriation lines down closer to actual spending
 - Reducing caseload by taking out various specialized workers that had been put in over the years
 - Focusing on specific needs for residential providers, rather than geographical availability
 - Highlighting developmental services and supports to the foster home – looking at LANS and recalibrating supports that are already in place
 - Continuing to focus on education, substance abuse
 - Building a “trauma network”
 - Establishing a Residential Monitoring Unit
 - Identifying resources for college students

The work was very methodical. It really wasn't until July they realized the need for a deeper cut. No one wanted to face that, and no one wanted to place them in that situation. They tried to focus on providing as much direct services to children as possible. The focus is on other services and supports available to support caseworkers and foster parents.

Mary White asked a question about the lack of cuts in the Office of the Inspector General. Andrea explained that she did not know the extent of DCFS' authority over the OIG budget but that it would not be surprising to have statutory limitations on the amount of funding an agency could reduce their watchdog's budget by. Mary stated that it seemed that the cuts affected the foster parents much more than any of the higher echelon. (**Post Meeting Note:** After the meeting Andrea found out that we did require the OIG to substantially reduce their budget.)

Foster Parent Support Specialist Program Reduction - Valerie Davis/Larry Chasey Ms. Davis, Associate Deputy in Field Operations, brought greetings from Deputy Arthur Bishop and explained that she shared their view on FPSS's. She stated that no one can

pay enough money for the care of our foster children. She explained that they don't like what our budget allows and had challenges and hard decisions to make to meet fiscal priorities. A goal is to partner with communities - partner with social services within the community to meet the needs of children.

- She emphasized that the FPSS program is still there, although there have been reductions.
- Linkages – caseworkers are given greater capacity to provide services and supports through reducing caseworker caseloads.
- Foster/Adopt PRIDE program still available to enable foster parents to build skills. Good training on the front-end prepares new foster parents.
- SWFCAC available for support.
- We will continue to publish *Illinois Families Now and Forever*, offering support to foster parents
- Trying to build all of the program capacities we have rather than take things away.

Members pointed out the need to have a full team of support specialists, noting the many things they do for foster families 24 hours per day every day, including crisis response when SOC fails. Valerie acknowledged their important role in foster care, and she said that is why this program was continued.

Larry Chasey stated that there were two decisions made regarding FPSS's when they were required to reduce the budget by 50%.

1. Concerned about geography, they realized that if they totally removed support specialists they would lose out, so downstate they reduced everyone equally, hoping for the best coverage.
2. In Cook they are not faced with the geography issue as much, so they kept people on in the full capacity, but reduced the number of FPSS's.

Valerie stated that we should just step back and try to make the best of what we have. She stated that there are supports. Ellen recommended, and Valerie stated that they will look at indicators to determine the disruptions in foster homes following the reduction of support through limiting support specialist roles.

The Council added Ellen Kazaras and Judy McAtee to the FPSS Committee, (Vicky Kline-Chair, Adrienne Welenc & Joyce Loy) and asked to have this group meet with Jose, Valerie, Larry, and Arthur Bishop.

Everyone should have after hours access to services and supports, in addition to the hotline number. Jerry Welenc stated that in monitoring they've found that in many cases the local 24-hour numbers don't work, and in some cases, they've given the FPSS phone number. *He recommended that the Council take action to follow up on the 24-hour support numbers given.*

Adrienne stated that we want to continue to work with the Associate Deputies and to keep the dialogue open. We want to research possible grants. Brian Austin stated that

during the joint meeting he was going to request a motion from the YAB to strengthen the FPSS's program.

MOTION: Uli Senz made a motion to state in the minutes that the Council is very disappointed with the decision to reduce the FPSS program, and the Council offers to work with the Associate Deputies to look for new ways to fund and maintain the program. Ray Chasteen seconded. The motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee Uli referenced the proposed revisions to the SWFCAC Rules of Procedure, identifying proposed changes, and responding to suggestions for wording revisions.

MOTION: Mary White moved to accept the proposed changes. Linda Stone seconded, and the motion carried.

Agency Reviews – Gwenn reported on the updated chart and reminded Council members of the process. Ellen mentioned that the “retaliation” question has caused some need for definition. She suggested alternate ways to state the question. Jerry demonstrated the way he frames the question to lead interviewees to an understanding of the intent. Heidi stated that she has experienced the interview from both sides and indicated that she realizes that the interview tool is not necessarily a scientific instrument.

Adolescent Issues Andrea Miller stated that they have not yet had a meeting.

Sibling Rights Subcommittee Joint Task Force

- Senator Hunter plans to hold focus groups. We should hear more when she speaks during the joint meeting with the YAB later this evening.
- The Sibling Rights Symposium was held, and information gathered there should set the foundation for the Joint Task Force.
- They are waiting to get some background information on sibling rights issues in other states, outlining some definitions, i.e. defining “siblings”

Archives – Jerry Welenc

This committee is still in the information-gathering phase. They are trying to construct a history of the Council's work. Geraldine Wilson mentioned some resources she has and indicated that she will continue to work to provide historic information.

System of Care/SASS - Claudia Davis

A meeting was held with stakeholders on September 27th.

- Hospitals are not aware of SASS procedures for youth 18-21.
- The committee suggests the development of a flow chart that the hospital would receive to complete as a schedule.
- 90-days may be extended by another 60 days

- One suggestion as to how to provide foster parents and staff the information was to develop a video to role-play the procedures. It could be mailed out to schools and different associations.
- They need representatives to work with stakeholders so that some of them could go out to obtain information within their local areas.
- Effective November 1st hospitals must utilize the current process or risk non-payment
- Homeless shelters are not aware that children are eligible for SASS - DPA could make someone at the shelter an application agent.
- They are overwhelmed. The volume of calls July 1st – 30th was more than 6000 calls. A great number of them generated additional calls.
- CARE = Crisis and Referral Entry service

FPSS - Vicky Kline

Arthur, Larry, Ray and committee members met via conference call August 13th.

- Cook eliminated 50% of their Support Specialists
- Downstate eliminated 50% of the FPSS work hours
- They indicated that addenda will be made to the program plan to still provide a full range of services
- Information will go out to foster parents via *Illinois Families Now & Forever*

A conference call with committee members only was held August 20th

- Contracts still had not gone out
- The committee developed a list of questions to submit for response. Questions went to key management August 25th.
- The committee believes it was the last to know about the changes to the group it represents.
- Contracts started coming out after the 25th. Several did not contain the addenda.
- Adrienne's September Director's Report includes a paragraph regarding the subcommittee's dissatisfaction of being left out of the loop.
- Vicky distributed a letter the FPSS subcommittee sent to the Council chair regarding hot issues.
- There was a discussion regarding the implementation of the cuts.

PA92-205 Records to Schools – Ray Chasteen, no new report. Ray will report at the next meeting.

AAC/YAB/CWAC Report - Michael Byrd

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council met August 6th and leadership has since met with the Director

- Regarding NACAC: Proposed Freddie Mac project has gotten started – urban parent program to train leaders and develop support groups around adoption issues
- Camille Sleet addressed proposed legislative changes regarding criminal bars. Tom Berkshire stated at the CWAC meeting that the Department does not yet have a legislative package prepared to present next spring. He indicated that we

should work together to put together a list of other items, since it does not seem that the timing is right to pursue this particular issue.

- Steps should be taken to prioritize the specific bars that we should follow up on.

Lynda Petrick stated that when foster parents give information on intake they might be pushed off because of a stated offense. However, they may have had charges reduced. The committee needs to follow up with local agencies for information, but it's unlikely that there will be good records.

CWAC Steering Committee

- SACWIS is ready to roll out to several agencies in a test pilot with a whole implementation plan for June 30th
- Federal audit Title IV-E was passed
- PIP plan returned with only two questions this time
 - o How can the Department get the Court Improvement Committee to collaborate with the Department better? Some of the items we got hit on we have no control over – they're court issues
 - o 2nd question – Michael will report on it at the next meeting.

Mandatory Ethics Training

Someone will attend a meeting to instruct us in the ethics training required for all committees, councils, etc.

SYAB

The youth are working with the Older Adolescent Workgroup, a subcommittee of CWAC, to assess the voice of adolescents. They've created a survey tool through the youth board to survey youth in foster care and residential homes to really change what's going on in the lives of adolescents in care.

Medication Logs - Jerry Welenc

- The committee is working on protocol regarding administering medication to youth in foster homes or residential placements, self-administration, children on the move, children on weekend passes, runaways etc.
- Jerry suggested that foster parents clip the materials they receive from the pharmacy to the medication log.
- It is the Department's responsibility to see that the medication protocol is being complied with.
- Compliance includes the following: administration of the medicine, management of the medicine and documentation.
- There was discussion around the time-consuming process of documentation.
- Recommended issues to be addressed from SWFCAC members:
 - o Add children refusing medication to the protocol
 - o Utilize a simple monthly calendar
 - o Jerry recommends that a training piece is added to the program.

Update Task Chart

Members made updates to the task chart. The updated task chart is attached.

Report from Office of Foster Parent Support Services - Ray Gates

-Gwenn Eyer is now taking minutes at SWFCAC meetings. The Host Family Project requires a lot of staff time. Nancy will be in the office to provide behind-the-scenes support to the Council.

-The support from DCFS administration for the Foster Parent Law continues, including the roles Gwenn and Jerry Welenc play.

Approval of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

Claudia made the motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting as written. Jim Jones seconded. The motion carried.

Review/Approval of the Agency Review Feedback Letter

Uli was lead on the team that reviewed Little City. The feedback letter, under Adrienne's signature, was included in the packet. Uli described his experience reviewing different agencies and stated his rationale for the "acceptable" rating the agency received. He also referenced the positive responses from the foster parents within the agency.

Linda Stone made a motion to approve the letter to Little City with recommended changes. Vicky Kline seconded. The motion carried.

Future agenda items

Clinical Issues of Expanded Capacity

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. Adrienne Welenc, Chair, asked members to take a short break and return at 9:00 p.m. for a joint meeting with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board.

**Joint Meeting
Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
& Statewide Youth Advisory Board
September 10, 2004
9:00-11:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn City Centre, Peoria, IL
Draft Minutes**

Brian Austin called the meeting to order at 9:35 p.m., welcoming all participants.

Host Family Program Update - Ray Gates

Ray indicated that during the joint meeting a year ago, one idea the YAB came up with was a program to support students in college. He stated that Diane DeLeonardo immediately said, "Yes! We can do this!" Our office has taken the lead, and three other offices/divisions have been involved, including the NIU Center for Child Welfare & Education.

Diane DeLeonardo

- Inspiration: the youth who "had the guts" to stand up and share their agendas with the adults on the SWFCAC
- Jeremy and Brian were recognized for their participation
- Approximately 14 students at NIU want to participate. Forty-five families have volunteered so far.
- Diane indicated that Adrienne said, "That is not enough!" and promoted the idea of offering care packages to additional students that were not in the pilot area (NIU). To date, 185 youth have signed up to receive care packages, and each has to complete a needs assessment. They still need more volunteers to send care packages.
- Brian created a PowerPoint presentation to share with families, and it was presented during the meeting.
- Downstate programs may be anticipated in the future. (SIU-C has 20 students.)
- The "faith" community and the college community are both key components

Drivers License Issues/State ID Card – Collaborate on Options

- Several issues differ between high school and college age youth
- The State Wards Association is now officially recognized and is in place to provide support to college students
- Youth don't have transportation to obtain license
- Youth need 25 hours driving time to obtain license
- Youth are transitioning out of care without a license

Discussion included the following points:

- To transport a youth to obtain a drivers license, the youth must be on the driver's insurance policy
- Some Independent Living agencies have money in their contracts to rent a car to transport a youth to take the driver's exam

- Independent Living has restrictions – not entitled to clothing vouchers, pay half on driving, etc.
- Foster parents won't allow youth to drive their personal cars due to perceived risks and expense.
- Driving is not a right, it is a privilege. Youth should design a plan to demonstrate responsibility. Draft a contract. Suggestions were maintaining a C average or higher, and paying half of the insurance, gas, and wear and tear on the car.
- Find someone to mentor new drivers – offer ride-alongs to meet the 25-hour requirement
- There is an automatic expense to the foster parent when a youth in care receives a driver's license. Every licensed driver in the household must be included in auto insurance policies. Depending on the foster parents' vehicle(s), the expense to insure a teen driver is exorbitant, in many cases forcing the need to purchase a vehicle specifically for the teen driver.

Vance made a motion to create a committee to address the drivers license issue. Samantha seconded, and the motion carried following a discussion. Committee members will include Mallory, Vance, Ebony, Brian, Arman, Elizabeth Richmond, and Diane DeLeonardo.

- The suggestion was made to secure free legal advice to guide next steps.
- Ray Gates suggested that they utilize the services of the Illinois Department of Insurance in Springfield.

Sibling Rights Resolution - Senator Mattie Hunter, Vice Chair, Health & Human Services Committee

- Youth drafted the resolution.
- Senator Hunter carried it to the Senate.
- They lobbied members of the House and Senate to get it passed.
- The Governor signed the resolution.
- The Governor's Joint Task Force on Sibling Rights will be established, with 20-23 members
 - o To be appointed, DCFS should submit the six names on DCFS letterhead (youth and adults) to the Governor's Office or to Luann Peters, Deputy Chief of Staff
- Public hearings must be held throughout the state, including testimony, both "pro" and "con".
 - o Decisions will be made, including who will chair or co-chair the task force.
 - o Hearings will be recorded. All General Assembly hearing procedures will be followed.
 - o Staff will gather information – "Has anyone else in the country done what we want to do?"
 - o Need to get professionals in the sibling rights field involved.
 - o Findings will be reported following the hearings.
- Possible outcomes
 - o Recommend that they proceed to make it a bill
 - o Leave it as it is

MOTION: Elizabeth Richmond, Co-Chair of the Adoption Advisory Council, and serving as the AAC's representative, made the motion at 11p.m to extend the meeting to finish the agenda items. Ellen Kazaras seconded. The motion carried.

The **Client Satisfaction Survey** form was distributed for review and comment.

Higher Education Issues

Suggestions regarding ways to promote information to foster parents and caseworkers regarding information available to college age youth

- Use survey information
- Use regional education advisors to do workshops. Gear workshops to both youth and adults.
- The *Crossroads* publication is sent to youth when they turn 16.
- Go to education advisors in local offices for assistance.
- Put articles in the new bi-monthly youth newsletter and in *Families Now & Forever*.

Foster Parent/Caseworker Training Needs – Older Adolescent Developmental Issues

This will go to Deputy Director Velma Williams for consideration by the symposia training committee.

GLBTQ Issues

- Ricardo addressed issues he faced in foster homes, including unfair stereotypes.
- Dr. Larry Small, Rudy Estrada and Ricardo have already worked on DCFS policy.
- Develop a workgroup to impact policy and practice.
- The effort would be made to make DCFS “Gay Neutral.”
- A key issue is matching children/youth with appropriate families.

MOTION: Ricardo made the motion to develop a joint SWFCAC/YAB/IAAC subcommittee to address LGBTQ issues. Melissa seconded, and the motion carried. Volunteers included Ricardo, Andrea Miller, Brian Austin, Sylvia Fonseca, Melissa Perez, Elizabeth Richmond, Ray Gates, and Corinne Lopez

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 p.m.