

**Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
 July 15, 2005, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
 Eastland Suites, 1907 N. Cunningham, Urbana, IL
 DRAFT MINUTES**

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff	Guests
Gladys Boyd	Donsetta Blakely	Tom Berkshire	Cindy Backstein
Ray Chasteen	Claudia Davis	Michael Byrd	Jerry Kline
Carolyn DePalma	Sylvia Flory	Aimee Cook	Don Loy
Vicky J. Kline	Ruth Jajko	Lina Cramer	Joyce Loy
Judy McAtee	James Jones	Mary Dyer	Jerry Welenc
Andrea Miller		Gwenn Eyer	
Uli Senz		Ray Gates	
Adrienne Welenc		Bridgette Glickman	
Mary White		Vanessa James	
Geraldine Wilson		Terry McGlothlin	

Hospitality

Vicky Kline welcomed council members and guests, and announced that the meeting would be recorded to assure accurate minutes.

Welcome and Introductions

Adrienne welcomed members and guests to the meeting, recognizing Joyce Loy, a past SWFCAC chair who was present to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Foster Parent Law. Joyce is the only past chair of the Council who was able to attend this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes from 5/20/05 Meeting – Adrienne said that Jerry Welenc should have been listed as a guest on the minutes. The change will be made. Uli Senz made the motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Geraldine Wilson seconded and the motion carried.

Council Administrative Business - Adrienne Welenc

There was no administrative business.
 There were no Final Reports to the Director.

Committee Reports:

***Policy Committee - Uli Senz, Jerry Welenc**

Uli, Jerry and Ray each reported on the Foster Parent Law Liaison trainings that are being held regionally throughout the state. Jerry referenced some of the content of the training, included the emphasis on the Annual Report and the scoring of the additional 2-point scoring components. Each of those who reported stated that the trainings have been successful. Adrienne followed up in stating that one measure of effectiveness is that participants lingered after the Chicago meeting to ask questions, demonstrating their interest in the process. Adrienne, Mary and Donsetta were recognized for providing

continental breakfasts at each training. Adrienne thanked the Policy Committee for the additional work they have been doing, stating that Uli has agreed to continue chairing the Policy Committee.

The Policy Committee has scheduled a teleconference to be held July 21st. Pursuant to the teleconference, Ray has been in contact with Randy Wells, the DCFS Legislative Liaison regarding the potential for moving forward with legislative changes, rule and procedure changes, etc.

Ray stated that he has been meeting with liaisons from agencies in Cook County in an effort to follow up on concerns that have come out of his regular Integrated Assessment management calls. These concerns are around the confusion foster parents are experiencing regarding their role in the IA process. Ray has been making a call for prospective SWFCAC members during these presentations. He anticipates that throughout the summer he will continue to add to the list of those interested in Council membership, and that decisions may be made at the end of the summer. Ray encouraged Council members to work on filling the open positions, particularly the downstate "expert" slots. Members were reminded that there are many facets of child welfare, and members need to be looking outside the immediate child welfare position. They were also reminded that there's a pretty detailed "job description" and that they need to check for willingness and availability to serve, noting that Council members may make recommendations and referrals, but the Director appoints the members.

***Adolescent Issues - Andrea Miller**

Andrea stated that there have been no formal meetings, but that she had been notified of a new program at the University of Illinois. She stated that Amy Clay, from the Children & Family Research Center, Emailed her regarding starting the Foster Parent Alumni Association, and requested that Andrea assist them with the organization of this support group. Ray suggested that Andrea check in with Don Bramlett at NIU, because Don has been working with two DCFS youth to form the State Wards Association on the campus of NIU. They have a similar purpose, and Ray recommended that Andrea touch base with them to share resources and ideas. Ray suggested that Andrea contact Sharon Freagon to get Don Bramlett's contact information.

***Archives - Ray Chasteen**

The information is physically in the Welenc home, but due to other commitments committee members have been unable to do any work on this project. Jerry stated that other committee members could step forward to work together to go through the files. Geraldine stated that she will be able to provide some additional support documents. Ray Gates stated that he would like to be involved, and indicated that Nancy could poll the group to make a plan for a workday. Andrea would also like to be involved. Jerry stated that the goal is to archive the past 10 years of SWFCAC service.

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

Andrea stated that she was unable to attend the last meeting. Mary Dyer reported that the graduation parties are taking place, and plans are being made for the joint meeting.

Adrienne reported that the YAB is delayed in their board and leadership transitions, so it looks like our joint meeting with them is questionable for September and more likely for January. Adrienne stated that youth councils statewide are having difficulties placing youth on their boards, and recommended that SWFCAC members support the development of full local councils.

***System of Care/SASS - Claudia Davis**

Claudia Davis was absent due to health issues. Uli reported on the SASS meeting as he is a member of the SASS Operations Workgroup. The SASS group took a hiatus in July, but the Operations Workgroup is currently dealing with issues around SASS transfers and the interface between hospitals. Uli gave a brief overview of the SASS procedures. Right now all of the referrals have to go to CARES. They are discussing the way referrals are made, but it is all a little up in the air right now. The overriding issue is to reduce the waiting period for clients.

***FPSS - Vicky Kline**

Vicky stated that nothing has happened since the May teleconference. She reported that she believes most FPSS have received the one-page signature page for their contractual agreements this year. She also said that there was no boilerplate language shown nor were full contracts included. She stated that last year Foster Parent Support Specialists went the whole year without confirmation regarding supervision and that the confusion and lack of organization led to the termination of at least one FPSS. The termination was done 'without cause,' and Vicky has requested clarification from management. She further stated that they were told money that was not used could be applied to other contracts, but that has not been done, resulting in huge geographic areas that are not covered. She said that many regions do not have Lead Foster Parent Support Specialists. Vicky recommended that they hold an in-person meeting with representation from SWFCAC and management. Ray stated that one of the things Larry and Arthur requested prior to the last teleconference was a list of questions and concerns so that they can research the issues in advance. Ray suggested that the FPSS committee list the 2005 issues as well as the 2006 issues and he will go to Arthur to try to set a time when all can meet together.

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

Ray stated that we are pretty much where we were at our last meeting. He stated that Terry sent out information regarding PA92-0295, and asked that council members interview schools in their areas. Ray said that he has one more person to interview in his area and he believes that he will be able to make the appointment for the interview. Ray stated that he has not heard from other Statewide members who are working on the project. Vicky Kline stated that she is working with Bessie Peabody in the Southern Region to interview schools there.

AAC/YAB/CWAC Reports - Mary Dyer/Bridgette Glickman

CWAC met in Springfield where the subcommittees dealt with SACWIS rollout and the potential of doing peer training with POS agencies training other POS agencies. Ray

Gates stated that the POS rollout is directly related to the work the Clinical Division is doing with Integrated Assessment. He stated that it is important for POS workers to be able to access the SACWIS database, and understand the method required to enter data into the system. He also stated that the Child and Youth Investment Team meetings have begun.

The Public Awareness subcommittee has a new committee name and will be working to publish the good news about the work DCFS does and the challenges DCFS faces.

CIAC – Met June 21st. They have a new birth mother member on this committee. They will be working with garnering the support of the judges in Cook County in appointing confidential intermediaries.

CFS – this group had a conference call and membership is low. They plan to send a letter to the Governor requesting the appointments required to fill empty slots.

IAAC – no report because Mary did not attend their last meeting.

Bridgette Glickman is the new liaison for the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and the other councils. Adrienne suggested that Council members list issues to be shared between Councils.

NEW BUSINESS

Foster Parents Working With Pre-Schoolers - Lina Cramer

Lina shared a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the slide presentation is attached. Members must send their comments on the brochure or on the Department's plans that she presented today, to Lena Cramer, Lindcr@aol.com, 847-475-2215 by 7/25/05. She also requested names of foster parents in the pilot communities who will participate.

Working Lunch - 10 Year Anniversary

Remarks from Director's Office - Tom Berkshire

Tom began by wishing the SWFCAC a “Happy Birthday.” He stated that it’s kind of fun to look back and consider where the Department was 10 years ago. He shared recent articles from the Chicago Tribune regarding DCFS. He pointed out that the article states that there is a significant decline in the need for homes for children. There are currently about 18,000 children/youth in care. More than 40% of the children and youth in care are over the age of 14. There are fewer than 1,400 children living in residential care. In the year 2000 there were about 4,000 children in residential. The number has dropped, as has the number of residential sites we utilize. The follow-up Tribune piece stated that the Department has a very interesting distribution of caseworkers, and has not achieved overall goals for the assignment of workers. It also stated that the Department is trying to shift about 55 workers from Cook, giving them the opportunity to work in other parts of the state. In addition, the Department has gotten the approval from the Governor’s office to increase staff by about 55 workers. The Department will be working on several pieces of the plan very quickly, and some will be rolled out within the next year. They will start a new process called the Child and Youth Investment Teams. They want the foster parent

and, where appropriate, the birth parent to be involved in placement decision-making for the child/youth.

Tom stated that the DCFS budget was basically approved as it was presented, and had about a 2% increase from the prior year. Some of the increase is driven by the population estimate and other is due to complying with the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) from the federal government. The Department will be reviewed in December 2006. If we have met the mark by that date we will suffer no penalty. If not, the Department could pay substantial fines. Next year's budget is basically pre-set, in an effort to avoid future squabbles. (As a result, the current budget will probably be the same as next year's.) Mr. Berkshire stated they had understood initially that the budget would be stable this year, but then during the past two weeks some of the human services providers were able to broker an increase.

Tom said one of the issues the Department is now dealing with surrounds the agreement brokered by the union, making it more lucrative to be a caseworker than a supervisor. They are looking at a way to look at it differently to enhance the situation for those with supervisory skills. Jerry Welenc asked how foster parents could work for an increase in board rates. Tom stated that there is not a clear path. He said that during the 1990's, *Voices for Illinois Children* was a strong supporter of DCFS. They have not been advocating so clearly for foster parents as of late. Mary White stated that it has been rumored that the DCFS Director is receiving a pay increase, and questioned why foster parent services and supports are being cut while the Director's pay may be increasing. Tom replied that he had not heard the rumor, did not know the answer to her question, and pointed out that the Directors have not yet been reappointed. He further stated that management pay increases have been zeroed out overall.

Uli asked for a forecast of what the child welfare system will look like in the near future, referring to agency reviews that demonstrate that some agencies do not appear to be committed to providing quality foster care services. Tom said that if you think about a system that in a very short time has shrunk by 65%, there would be a lot of refinement in agency mandates. He stated that we have had a number of agencies providing residential care where we had only one or two children, and we have pulled away from those programs. He said that maybe now is the time to decide whom should/should not be providing childcare services. He also mentioned that we have already been looking at the request by the BH judge to create more effective therapeutic foster care programs.

Ray Chasteen asked what accounts for the lower number of children and youth in care, considering that we still have a high number of risk factors. Tom stated that some of the reasons the number of children in care has dropped include the following: changes in the law, the fact that referrals from AFDC have stopped, the redesigned approach for home of relative, a higher level of services to intact families, high numbers of children and youth placed for permanency, etc. Ray said that he is concerned that there are children out there who need services but are being missed. He further suggested that preschool children are underserved regarding the need for protective services. Tom said that the legislature passed a law stating that DCFS is required to provide behavioral health services and recommended that we invite them to address the Council. Gene Griffin, a

lawyer and a Ph.D. Psychologist, is the lead person and he has staff in Chicago and downstate. Providers are challenged by how to provide psychiatric services in rural areas. Ray Gates stated that we are also using some of the folks from Service Intervention in this effort.

Medications Committee Update - Jerry Welenc

Jerry stated that this committee is a work in progress. DCFS' main role is seeing that whatever is prescribed for children in care is properly handled and logged, ensuring that medications are dispensed appropriately. One thing that they have been working on is a foster parent/caseworker education process. They are working on several issues at once trying to come up with a uniform code of protocols to handle medication for children in care. However, he stated that this group includes children on the run, on the street, in residential care, etc. and that other agencies may have different protocols for how they handle medications. The majority of these drugs may be psychotropic drugs, in addition to drugs used to treat the high number of children and youth diagnosed with diabetes. Jerry stated that his role in the process is to give the foster parent's perspective as well as offer his professional knowledge as a pharmacist. He indicated that it has been hard to get together as a committee, and that they are continuing to work on the issues to be addressed. He stated that if there were any drafts for review he would make sure to get them to the SWFCAC. Adrienne stated that if Council members have issues to share they need to send their comments to Jerry.

IA Presentations to Foster Parents - Ray Gates

This report is referenced in detail in the previous Policy Committee Report.

Report from Office of Foster Parent Support Services - Ray Gates

In honor of the 10th anniversary, Ray referenced the packet including information regarding the signing of the Foster Parent Law. The packet includes photos, a copy of the original law, an early SWFCAC agenda and minutes of the meeting, and a 1984 memo asking the RA's to consider naming foster parents to serve on the original Foster Parent Committee. Adrienne and Jerry addressed some of the early foster parent efforts including early marches for higher board rates and other marches that resulted in the addition of Foster Parent Support Specialists.

Ray stated that all past chairs were invited to participate in the celebration today and expressed that several wished to attend, but were unable to do so. He read comments from Cyd Runde.

Ray switched gears to recognize Gwenn Eyer for her recent national award as a government meeting professional. Gwenn will coordinate the 2006 Caregiver Institutes.

Ray stated that Bill Schnidt, a speaker at a previous meeting, is continuing to work on clothing voucher issues and Ray, with the chair's permission, asked the Council to submit comments as to whether the program is working successfully. Vanessa stated that she is looking forward to publishing a newsletter article regarding the process. Ray Gates will follow up with Arthur Bishop to ensure that caseworkers are trained to assist foster

parents in managing the process. Ray Chasteen pointed out that this is a role that Foster Parent Support Specialists could fulfill.

Ray updated the Council regarding the sexual abuse training. When Gayle Hansen presented a summary of the progress with the training program at an earlier SWFCAC meeting they anticipated that the program would be rolled out by this time. However, the new Training Manager, Judy Zaleski, identified the following concerns: the way the training addresses resilience in children should be enmeshed with another training regarding resilience; the lack of potential practical application during the training; the need to verify training beside current policy, and the timeline for presentation. One focus of the Training Office will be online training, and this curriculum may potentially be presented as an interactive online training. In addition, the training will be retooled for in-person training. Ray Chasteen and Uli Senz both spoke to their opinion that this training should be in-person.

Ray distributed the DCFS Conflict of Interest forms for members to complete and return if they have a professional contract with DCFS.

Review Tracking Chart/FY'06 Objectives - Adrienne Welenc

- 1) Ongoing, update based on Ray's Report
- 2) Ongoing
- 3) Ongoing – remove Michael Byrd's name from this task; Jerry, Uli, Andrea, Ray G. and Ray C. will work on this project. (Ray Chasteen is the chair.)
- 19) Ongoing – the Council is responsible for making a recommendation.
- 21) Ongoing – discussion regarding having this appealed. Members will quickly complete their interviews. Ray Chasteen will summarize by the end of August. Ray Gates will inquire about speaking with caseworkers, and will speak to Andrea Ingram to gather information regarding this situation.

Next Meeting/Agenda; Closing Issues - Adrienne Welenc

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 9th and will be a joint meeting with the YAB.

Additional Notes:

Ray Gates discussed travel reimbursement for SWFCAC members. Reimbursement may include mileage, overnight accommodations (direct billed) and per diem just as an employee on "travel status."

Uli Stated that he has been assigned and has attended a meeting of the Child Welfare Employee Licensing Board and has already joined a subcommittee. He requested a spot on the agenda for future reports since he will represent the Council with the Board.

Adjourn

Andrea Miller made a motion to adjourn. Mary White seconded. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

