

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting

February 25, 2005

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Hawthorne Suites, 1 Lyons Court, Bloomington, IL

Approved Minutes

Members Present	Members Absent	Guests
Donsetta Blakely	Ray Chasteen	Cindy Backstein
Gladys Boyd	Carolyn DePalma	Stan Case
Heidi Darville	Jim Lane	Daryl Lynn Guessford
Claudia Davis		June Humphrey
Sylvia Flory	DCFS Staff	Phillip Lee
Ruth Jajko	Janise Alston	Carol Lescolleet
Jim Jones	Mary Dyer	Joyce Loy
Vicky Kline	Gwenn Eyer	Elizabeth Richmond
Erma Lee	Ray Gates	Jerry Welenc
Andrea Miller	Stephanie Hanko	April Woods
Judith McAtee	Vanessa James	
Uli Senz	Jean Maher	
Adrienne Welenc	Terry McGlothlin	
Mary White		
Geraldine Wilson		

Hospitality - Donsetta Blakely

Donsetta welcomed everyone; she stated that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of ensuring accurate minutes and that this meeting is covered under the Open Meetings Act.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes from 1/28/05 Meeting - Council

Gladys questioned the chair regarding her understanding that Cynthia Moreno would attend the SWFCAC meeting to address the subsidy issue. Gladys stated that IFAPA wanted representation at the table when Deputy Director Moreno attended. The chair stated that she did not understand the goal of Gladys' conversation with her, and that no one from IFAPA had requested time on the agenda for either meeting. Ray Gates clarified that Cynthia Moreno was never asked to attend the last meeting nor was there a plan to ask her to attend the meeting. There had been a request to ask her to attend the Adoption Advisory Council meeting, but that was not necessary because June Dorn covered it. Ray added that there is only one venue in the Department for the adoption subsidy form issues and that is through the Director's Office and not through Cynthia Moreno.

Donsetta made a motion to approve the minutes amended as necessary. Geraldine Wilson seconded. The motion carried.

Administrative Business - Adrienne Welenc

None reported

Final Reports to Director - Adrienne Welenc

Adrienne stated that there were no reports.

Committee Reports

Policy Committee - Jerry, Heidi, Uli

Uli stated that they did not have a report.

Implementation Reviews

Mary White stated that in one of her upcoming reviews the APT had reassigned his responsibilities to another APT, and Mary expressed the concern that the new APT is unaware that he is expected to attend the review. Ray asked Terry to Email the APT staff to ensure that he understands the process.

Andrea expressed that on one of her agency reviews the APT did not appear to have a strong knowledge of his role. She asked for clarification of the APT role. Ray stated that the role description includes the following: set up the agency appointment for the SWFCAC team, introduce the members of the Council that are conducting the review, discuss the purpose of the review, turn it over to the SWFCAC members to conduct the reviews, and stay through the interviews since they already have a relationship with the agency and can keep the process flowing if the interviewers meet challenges along the way.

Geraldine Wilson stated that the APT took notes during their interview.

Ray reviewed the change in the agency review procedure this year: SWFCAC reviewers should stay together to write their conclusions following the interviews. As a courtesy, he suggested that reviewers thank the APT for attending the meeting, and then offer him/her the opportunity to leave before writing conclusions, as APT is not required to remain after the interviews have been completed.

Adolescent Issues Committee - Andrea Miller

Andrea indicated that the committee itself has not been particularly active, but that she has been talking with Cynthia Moreno's office regarding some of the projects that are being undertaken. Cindy Brunger is working specifically with the Youth in College Program, tidying up the program. Cynthia is working on more global work including teens aging out, transitioning teens and how to parent teens – looking at what the issues are right now and how the Department can better serve youth within the state. Andrea indicated that they recognize the importance of identifying goals for youth that enter the transitional period, that the traditional independent living programs are not always meeting the youths' needs, and that youth are still aging out without concrete plans and solid supports, sometimes ending up in a relationship with the Department of Corrections or the Department of Mental Health. They are reviewing the current programs to identify which pieces need to stay the same and which need to be revised. Andrea participated in a conference call to provide feedback. She suggested that since many foster parents have only short-term relationships with youth in their care, as opposed to some families who might have a five-year relationship with a youth, the perception is more of an institutional approach for the youth - transitional or independent living programs. They're trying to bring

about a more beneficial protocol. They're also looking at the role of the caseworker in the process, and are looking at the opportunity to begin working with youth when they are freshman in high school to try to have more impact on young lives.

Janise asked if there was attention being given to an overall standard protocol for all families to follow to ensure consistently positive outcomes for youth in care. Adrienne stated that we need to redirect our caseworkers to understand that there are other options where you don't have to send a child to independence but rather develop solid supports with foster families. She said that planning needs to begin when the youth comes into the foster home. This includes planning for college or future employment, rather than a short-term goal of just making it until their 18th birthday to then go right out into independent living without looking at what the needs of the youth might be.

Donsetta stated that her daughter had enjoyed the perks of independent living and the supports that were offered, but that it did not really get her set for developing life skills.

Uli referred back to a past strategy of seeing how the services could be provided in the foster home rather than automatically going to an independent living approach.

Ruth stated that CWAC also has an Older Adolescent Committee that is working on developing strategies around the major life domains. Ruth recommended that SWFCAC members get involved in some of the CWAC subcommittees shown on the handout.

Adrienne recommended that members review and comment on the Youth in College handout that was distributed.

Erma stated that she is sort of facing the situation under discussion. Her son, a junior in college, is being directed by the worker to go into an independent living program rather than maintain connections with Erma's family throughout his college years. She also has two freshmen. One stepped-down from an institution and fears dropping back into the old situation. Erma stated that she wishes that the worker and foster parent could be on the same page to keep the youth from receiving mixed messages. The message they're getting from the workers is that they won't have ongoing connections to the foster family.

Vicky Kline stated that the youth have the Ansell Casey or the IEP and other tools to use in service plans to make it a more collaborative planning process.

Sylvia Flory stated that the policies of the Department still tend to guide staff one way, focusing on timeframes for performance and movement, but what's left out sometimes is an identification of the needs of the child within the foster family. She stated that we need to advocate for a more holistic approach, using the framework that is already there.

Adrienne stated that members need to be sure that the issues, comments, and concerns of the individual council members get forwarded to the Department and those who will act on it.

Janice stated that everyone in the Department is very goal-oriented. Sylvia stated that it's not bad to have a goal, but that there are many ways to go about accomplishing the goal, and that

foster parents need to work to establish a presence in developing the steps to accomplish the goal.

Uli stated that we as a Council have too little impact on bad practice. We have an impact on policy, but not so much on practice.

Archives Committee - Ray Chasteen

No report.

Youth Advisory Board Liaisons - Andrea Miller

No report.

System of Care/SASS Committee - Uli Senz

A meeting was held February 4th. Uli stated that there are not a lot of consumer issues to deal with right now. The focus is more on helping the providers learn to work together and how to function under the fiscal constraints of the program. They are working on “technical issues” around billing. Another issue was the practice of opening cases to SASS (90-days). Most families do not use the 90 days (many decline services) but the case currently must remain open for the full period. Some cases need additional time. One suggestion was that they do a 30-day extension and another was that the providers go ahead and do the work. John Lyons is a provider doing evaluations to determine consumer perception about the whole program. There are different reports about what people do about contradictory directions coming from the CARES Unit.

FPSS Committee - Vicky Kline

Vicky reported on a February 7th Conference call with key management. She indicated that it is still unclear who supervises the FPSS and the Lead FPSS, and that supervisors need to be made aware of supervisory responsibilities and receive copies of appropriate program plans and addenda. There is still major concern regarding the addition of addenda to signed contracts. Larry Chasey stated during the conference call that if a FPSS resigns, the FPSS can either be replaced, or the money can be used to increase the hours of another FPSS in the area. Arthur Bishop stated that so far it is anticipated that the FPSS program will be funded for FY'06; however, they have been asked to look for further cuts, so nothing is solid. When asked during the call about how DCFS plans to increase foster parent support, Arthur said through Integrated Assessment, Child & Youth Investment Teams, stabilization centers and caseworkers so that foster parents will be partnering with caseworkers, clinical staff, etc. The Department will identify triggers to identify the needs of youth early on and locate resources in the community. They are also working on reducing caseloads and enhancing SACWIS. In addition, they have been going into the regions and listening to staff. One of the issues identified by a worker was that, because of cuts in PRIDE, foster parents couldn't get trained. He will be discussing with the appropriate deputies the possibility of allowing licensing staff to provide the training in the home of the foster parent. Arthur asked that Larry and Jose coordinate two future conference calls - one downstate and one in Cook County - for the FPSS, Lead FPSS, and all involved supervisors so that all of these issues can be discussed and everyone will have the same information.

Heidi suggested that they add the FPSS information to the Diligent Recruitment Plan. Ray stated that the Office of Foster Parent Support Services office should be able to present a draft plan at the next SWFCAC meeting.

Adrienne stated that there is a March 7th meeting to discuss the clothing voucher issues, and she asked for suggestions from Council members.

PA92-0295 Records to Schools - Ray Chasteen
No Report.

AAC/YAB/CWAC Reports - Janise Alston/Mary Dyer

NOTE: No full reports since they have not met since our last meeting.

Adoption Advisory Council – next meeting April 1

CWAC – Next Meeting April 1

Youth Advisory Board – The YAB will meet the weekend of March 11-13 in Fairfield. Michael Byrd is chairing the sibling rights committee and working with Senator Mattie Hunter to proceed with scheduling the hearings throughout the state. Kareem Pender coordinates the Youth Advisory Boards and Mary and Janise rely on him to keep them updated on their work.

NEW BUSINESS

SASS Update - Stephanie Hanko

Stephanie stated that SASS is a crisis system, but it is not designed to decide whether a child needs to be hospitalized. It is designed to assess the needs of the child and identify the community resources that are available to meet the child's needs. (Hospitalization may be necessary, but that's a medical decision.) The program for DCFS has not dramatically shifted. There are still SASS providers statewide with a statewide call-in 800 number for any family with a child or youth facing a mental health crisis. The SASS providers did not shift a whole lot, although there are a few new ones. Stephanie stated that there is a lot of experience out there, and in many areas they're doing a phenomenal job. The DCFS SASS system used to be stand-alone, and DHS was a separate SASS system. It is now a statewide SASS system, including DCFS, DHS and DPA, in an attempt to coordinate a standardized set of services. For DCFS the same core set of services is there. The SASS provider responds to the CARES call within 30 minutes (previously within 60 minutes). The SASS provider has to be on site within 90 minutes following receiving the information from CARES (prior to FY'04 it was a 4 hour response). The current protocol forces the hospitals to keep SASS involved throughout the process so that SASS is involved in the discharge, or the hospital does not get paid. This is an attempt to assure that quality of care is enhanced.

Donsetta suggested color-coding files so that intake could immediately identify when there has been a previous psych hospitalization.

Cindy Backstein said that there should be a protocol developed so that families can wrap in community services prior to release from the hospital. If there are problems with SASS at DCFS, you may call Stephanie Hanko at 217/524-3304 or Jane Hastings at 312/814-6805.

Working Lunch - Agency Review Progress - Adrienne Welenc

The agency review work chart (attached) was updated to identify which agencies were scheduled, completed, etc.

Report from Office of Foster Parent Support - Ray Gates

Training on new adoption subsidy forms - Ray read a report from June Dorn. There were 16 one-day trainings held throughout the state between Jan. 21 - 31. There were 2 in the Southern region, 4 in the Central region, 2 in the Northern region and 8 in the 3 Cook regions. The one additional training is scheduled for March 16th and it will be held at the Cook-South Regional Office (6201 S. Emerald).

There may be additional trainings scheduled based on need.

The trainings indicated a strong need for the adoption core training - which is planned to be ready in July 2005.

Non-Ward Subsidies - Federal intent is to make adoption assistance available to otherwise eligible children without the need for a judicial determination of abuse, neglect or dependency. These are not intended for international adoptions - as it would be difficult for these to meet the state's special needs criteria.

4 ways non-wards may be eligible:

- 1) Child is SSI eligible at the time the adoption proceedings are initiated and the child meets the state's special needs criteria;
- 2) Subsequent adoption of a child that was previously receiving a subsidy but is the subject of a new adoption due to death or incapacitation of the original adoptive parent; (this category is not new)
- 3) Child of an IV-E ward minor parent when both are placed together in foster care;
- 4) Child is AFDC eligible at the time of removal from their home and a judicial determination has been made that remaining in the home would be contrary to the child's welfare and there is a determination made by the state that the child meets the state's special need criteria.

Scoring Implementation Plans - Update - Gwenn Eyer

Gwenn congratulated the Council on their commitment to the scoring process. All plans have been scored three times. Several members went over and above to score more than their assigned plans. One set of feedback letters has been prepared for signature. The Policy Committee will reconvene in the next few weeks to address technical issues around the scoring of plans.

Next Meeting/Agenda; Closing Issues - Adrienne Welenc

- Draft Diligent Recruitment Plan presentation, Diane DeLeonardo
- Heidi asked about what we are doing for adoption preservation for adopted youth or subsidized guardianship youth from the past few years. No one is reaching out to those families. What Adoption Preservation Services are available to them? How do we make it available to them? Jim Jones stated that it is one of the target areas of the Adoption Advisory Council, indicating that one of the issues is that there are not a lot of dollars available right now, and the AAC is moving forward with suggestions as to how to maximize the funding and resources that are available.
- Standby Adoption steps
- Youth in College, Cindy Brunger
- Report on what is being done for Foster Parent Appreciation Month (May) - External Affairs/Communications
- Appoint Nominating Committee
- Out of State use of medical cards - adoption and foster care
- Update from Licensing - Steve Minter or Lynda Petrick

Update Task Chart - Adrienne Welenc

The task chart was reviewed and updated.

Adjourn

Andrea Miller made a motion to adjourn and Erma Lee seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP LIST CHANGE:

Judy McAtee Email: caatimpond@sbcglobal.net

Agencies to be Reviewed in 2005

REGION	AGENCY	DATE	LEAD	PARTNER	COMMENTS
Cook	ABJ		Ray Gates	Jerry Welenc	Ray has contacted APT
Cook	Ada S. McKinley Comm. Svcs.		Ruth Jajko	Jim Jones	
Cook	Bethany Christian Services		Adrienne Welenc	Donsetta Blakely	
Central	Bethany for Children & Families		Ray Chasteen	Judy McAtee	
Southern	Catholic Social Svcs of Belleville		Vicky Kline	Claudia Davis	
Cook	Centers for New Horizon		Donsetta Blakely	Erma Lee	
Cook	CHASI		Donsetta	Geraldine Wilson	
Cook	Chicago Commons Assoc.		Ruth Jajko	Gladys Boyd	
Central	Children's Home Assoc. of IL	03/22	Ray Gates	Joyce Loy	Ray has contacted APT
Central	Counseling and Family Svcs.	2/16	Mary White	Carolyn DePalma	Completed.
Cook	DCFS Cook Central		Heidi Darville	Jim Jones	
Cook	DCFS Cook North		Ruth Jajko	Sylvia Flory	
Northern	Easter Seal Rehab Center of Will-Grundy County	3/3	Mary White	Carolyn DePalma	Scheduling call-back came to Terry from Exec Director?
Southern	Family Care of Illinois		Claudia Davis	Vicky Kline	
Central	Family Services Center of Sangamon County		Andrea Miller	Mary White	
Cook	Generations Community Services		Gladys Boyd	Erma Lee	
Cook	Hephzibah Children's Assoc.		Adrienne Welenc	Donsetta Blakely	
Central	Hoyleton Youth and Family Services/Lifelink		Vicky Kline	Claudia Davis	
Cook	Hull House Association		Sylvia Flory	Jerry Welenc	
Cook	Kaleidoscope, Inc.	3/15	Uli Senz	Jerry Welenc	
Cook	Lutheran Child and Family Svcs.		Ray Gates	Erma Lee	Ray has contacted APT
Cook	Lydia Home Association	2/15	Uli Senz	Jim Jones	Have transcripts
Cook	New Life Social Services	03/01	Heidi Darville	Sylvia Flory	
Cook	The Children's Place Association		Adrienne Welenc	Geraldine Wilson	
Cook	Unity Parenting & Counseling Center		Gladys Boyd	Donsetta Blakely	
Cook	Universal Family Connection		Geraldine Wilson	Gladys Boyd	
Central	Webster-Cantrell Hall		Andrea Miller	Mary White	
Cook	Westside Holistic Family Svcs.	2/28	Uli Senz	Heidi Darville	
Central	Youth Svc. Bureau of IL Valley	3/10	Joyce Loy	Judy McAtee	