

**Adoption Advisory Council**  
**Eastland Suites, 1801 Eastland Drive**  
**February 6, 2009**  
**10:00 – 3:00**  
**Approved MINUTES**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT</b>		<b>MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>DCFS STAFF PRESENT</b>
Donsetta Blakely	Dave Matthews	Dr. Robert Bloom	Ray Gates
Julie Cebulski	Dorothy McGhee	Kathy Casey	Terry McGlothlin
Claudia Dancy-Davis	Lisa Myles	Krista McCoy	Larry Small
DeAudrey Davis	Maripat Oliver	Roman McCray	
Tamara Guy	Judy Pence	Kate Monte	<b>GUESTS</b>
Ruth Jajko	Elizabeth Richmond	Breanne Radtke	Dorothy Davis
Derek Jeske	Jackie Sharp Akins	Gina Samuels	Marlanna Dokken
Betty Johnson	Carol Sheley	Michele Seidl	Cynthia Spurgeon
James Jones	Karen Taylor	Mark Werner	Paula Taft
Patricia Kelso	Karen Wardlaw		Melissa Thomas
Billie Ray Lewis	Kim Wheelock		
Susanne Loss	Linda Wolter		

**Welcome & Introductions**

Elizabeth welcomed council members and guests. Everyone introduced themselves.

**Report from Div. of Clinical Services (pending approval)**

Larry Small introduced himself as a Psychologist, and the Acting Deputy Director of the Division of Clinical Services. He gave the following report.

Trauma Initiative – This initiative began with the previous administration. Dr. Bruce Perry, a national trauma expert with the National Child Trauma Coalition, was brought in. He teaches a new way to look at mental illness and mental health in children, particularly children who have been exposed to traumatic events. Children carry a lot of diagnosis and as they get older and go through hospitalizations and psychologicals, the diagnoses change. Dr. Perry suggested that rather than labeling the behavior with diagnosis, we identify what is going on inside the child based on how the child experienced the world within the community and the family, and what stresses or trauma they have been exposed to. In the previous administration we started to train our caseworkers on this. We have now developed a whole track of curriculum on trauma, the effects of trauma on a child's development and on the family. We are educating everyone involved in the child's life – foster parent, adoptive parent, birth parent, caseworkers, therapists, the courts, and the schools. The first training is Psychological First Aid, a basic trauma training developed as a result of natural disasters. Second is Trauma 101, which is a 3-hour course that is now being offered to foster and adoptive parents. On the DCFS website, [www.state.il.us/dcf](http://www.state.il.us/dcf), there is a list of all of the training courses. Trauma 201 is now being rolled out and it builds on Trauma 101, and looks at evidenced-based practice. In about 10 weeks, after caseworkers are trained, it will be offered to caregivers. The next training will be on the CANS (Child & Adolescent Needs & Strengths) and then CANS Service Planning. This training will be used to develop a trauma informed treatment/service plan for the parent, caregiver and child, that looks at support systems, the child's strengths, their physical health, mental health, developmental functioning, domestic violence, substance abuse, etc.

Three or four years ago DCFS started a pilot of evidence-based practice used with trauma affected clients. Infant/parent psychotherapy – done with children age 0-5, looks at the relationship of a caregiver and a child. Ideally it is working with undoing the effects of early trauma by helping them better understand their world by building their attachment. It helps the caregiver help the child. We use the same Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for children age 6-11. By undoing the effects of the trauma you are also helping the caregiver to help reassure the child. The last group is the **SPARKS (Structured Parent ? )**, a model for older youth. It is a group problem solving model that gives youth coping skills and helps them build support systems for themselves. When we go forward with this model we will also have to prepare for how to handle transportation issues for the youth.

Through the Child's Mental Health Partnership, they put together a statewide map that identifies resources for child psychiatry, for 0-5 and all of these evidence based practices and it plots them out throughout the state. You can access these services whether you are DCFS or not. The parent has a key role in the treatment in all of these trauma focused therapies. Historically the child only participates in therapy. For this to be successful we need parent participation and support.

Larry said DCFS has been meeting with DHS and DMH to partner and combine dollars so that services can be available across the board for clients. We are working on smooth transitioning of children who are older to the adult community system or mental health system. The Director is working on building community involvement and resources, through programs like the Strengthening Families Initiative, Family Advocacy Centers, and Partnering with Parents Initiative.

Ray asked how the Clinical Screeners are using the trauma focus in their work with Integrated Assessments. Larry said the Clinical Screeners are also participating in the Learning Collaboratives so they are getting the same training. As this rolls out we will have tiers of field support through the trauma specialists and practice applications specialists, then a whole other layer with the clinical managers, the IA screeners, and the consulting psychologists.

Ray asked Larry to talk about the network of consulting psychologists, particularly how families can benefit from those services. Larry said there are 21 consulting psychologists throughout the state. This began in 1997. They provide clinical consultation to the caseworkers. We are now doing the same thing with post adoption workers so that when they have a clinical question, they can access the clinical psychologist, whether it is for a psychological, providing a community service, or just about doing a presentation on a case. Larry advised that it is best for caregivers to go through the caseworker or post adopt worker to contact a consulting psychologist so they are at the table with you; however, if caregivers are having a hard time getting help they can call Brenda Henderson who runs the psychology department at 708/225-8056, or Larry Small at 312/814-5987.

Susanne said a Psychological First Aid class was cancelled in Anna due to inclement weather, and asked if caregivers can attend Trauma 101 without having attended the Psychological First Aid class first. Larry said they could, and that these classes will be offered on an ongoing basis because there are always new caregivers and workers to train.

Linda asked how the system is interacting with Adoption Preservation. Larry said he has been working with June, and she is in agreement to have her post adoption specialists work with the consulting psychologists. When there is a request for a psychological for post adopt cases, someone

needs to craft and explain the referral questions and explain the results and recommendations. They are working to get that consultation in place. We are also doing that with primary care physicians throughout the state.

Office of Training - Larry said he is the Acting Deputy of the Clinical Division, and is over the Training Unit and Craig Missel is in the position formerly held by Judy Zaleski. Larry said that the biggest training change will not be the administration of training but on how training is delivered. The Learning Collaboratives were designed as a model that is no more than 45 minutes away from anyone. There are 141 learning collaboratives and 32 learning collaborative centers in the state. Training will be ongoing, so that caseworkers will go to learning collaboratives every other month. There will also eventually be affinity groups or specialty groups formed for supervisors, caseworkers, therapists, parents, etc.

Ray said one of the issues the council has been concerned with has been that Training is moving toward providing materials on DVD or computer. Many caregivers do not have access to internet or to DVD players. The Advisory Council will continue to advocate keeping materials available in paper form. The SWFCAC will be sending a recommendation to the Director on that specific point. Karen Taylor said that Joan Langan is also very aware of the issue and supportive of that.

Elizabeth said the Foster Parent Handbooks are now being handed out with a binder clip instead of the bright yellow binders that were previously used. She said foster parents use their Foster Parent Handbook a lot, and it is important for foster parents to have and keep updated as a resource. Larry approved going back to the binders. Ray will pursue ordering the binders.

Elizabeth said she would like Craig to come to a meeting to talk about training needs for adoptive parents. She said she doesn't think adoptive parents know they can come to trainings, and the titles need to be in simple language that reflects the needs that they need to meet, and that it is relevant to the post adoption population as well. Karen said part of the problem is getting the information out to adoptive parents. Some families do not want information in their mail about something unrelated to their subsidy. We have to find another avenue, such as a phone tree or newsletters. Vanessa said there is a training page on the regional insert that clearly states that all caregivers are welcome to attend the trainings. She offered to clarify that statement. She also suggested doing a list of trainings in the newsletter that are applicable to adoptive parents.

DCFS Organization - Ray asked Larry to give an update on the organization of DCFS. Larry said there are several Acting Deputies: Daniel Fitzgerald, Div. of Service Intervention; Kara Teeple, Div. of Placement & Permanency; George Vennikandam, Division of Child Protection. The DCFS organization chart can be found on the DCFS website at [www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/orgchart.pdf](http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/orgchart.pdf).

The major focus for this administration is reunification, family engagement, permanency and getting more community involvement. The Director is very focused on prevention in the communities. We are doing some very creative things, such as the Parent Cafes through Strengthening Families; and a parenting class to single African-American males, age 17-23, who play basketball, where training is being provided while they play basketball, with the Coaches as trainers. Larry said that all of the trauma trainings he mentioned are also going to be given to community providers and to court personnel.

Budget – Larry said that as a state we have a \$9 billion deficit. Dollars to the Department seem to be shrinking. Larry suggested that the Council invite Matt Grady, Deputy Director of the Division of Budget & Finance, to do a PowerPoint presentation that he recently gave to the POS agencies. Larry said we have been doing a lot in the Department to beef up our claiming dollars and trying to maximize dollars as much as possible. We are trying to get POS agencies to start doing the claiming as well. Although the reimbursements would not come back to the agency directly, it does come back to the families and the agency indirectly through services. Another major initiative is to license relative foster care homes to increase reimbursement.

### **Report from Office of Foster Parent Support Services.**

IFAPA Conference - Ray said the Director was impressed by the dedication and positive remarks he heard from caregivers at the IFAPA Conference in October. He asked Ray's office to work with IFAPA to start planning another conference for FY' 11, to be held in October 2010. The date for the first planning committee meeting is March 23 from 10am-1pm at the DCFS Harvey office.

Caregiver Institutes – Ray distributed copies of a flyer that gave details and registration information for the upcoming Caregiver Institutes. He asked council members to share the information with other caregivers. Terry will send the flyers via email to council members on Monday. Ray said the training focus for this year's institutes is on mental health issues and services. A youth panel will speak first, as they have at past institutes, followed by the Regional Administrator. Dr. Diahann Moore and a foster parent co-trainer will then talk about how to know when you need psych services, and where and how to access them. Susanne Loss is pulling together resources for the Southern area institute. Dr. Leone Legan will train for the two afternoon sessions on children and youth experiencing self harm; common mental health diagnoses and the 5 axis model of diagnosis. Ray said we can serve up to 100 caregivers at each site.

### **Update Bylaws**

Elizabeth said the bylaws will be emailed to council members prior to the next meeting, presented at the April meeting, and voted on at the June meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

*Karen Taylor made a motion to accept the November 21, 2008 minutes as written. Ruth Jajko seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.*

### **Update Committee List**

The Council made several changes to the existing committee lists. Terry will update the list and send it out to council members.

### **Plans for Adoption Month 2009**

There was discussion about how to recognize Adoption Month in 2009. Following are suggestions that were mentioned:

- \*Awareness campaign to get the word out about what Adoption Month is
- \*Involve the youth – make posters
- \*Public Service Announcements
- \*There have been some positive ads on adoptions by celebrities – find out who sponsored them. Dave Thomas Foundation?
- \*Spearhead simultaneous celebrations all over the state, linking them together with statewide media coverage.

- \*Work with the Governor's Office on more than a proclamation
- \*Coloring contests at Wendy's – have kids color the tray placemats. Wendy's has been involved in the past. Jim Jones said he could make a contact.
- \*Use service men who have adopted for the spots on TV for service men.
- \*Coordinate with other groups - Northern Region always does an event. Babyfold does a day in November with kid's activities. Quincy – four days of the month with family photos, movie night, Sat. at the park, etc.; Marion and Mt. Vernon adoption celebration parades.
- \*Free day for children's museums or zoos.
- \*Come up with a catch phrase to connect people.
- \*Tap into IL Bar Association or another entity.

## **Committee Reports**

### Membership Committee

Terry said that Mark asked for more members for this committee. They will be working soon to find new members to replace those whose terms are ending in June 2009.

### Post Adoption Workgroup/CCBYS Update

The Post Adoption Workgroup drafted a follow-up memo to the Director from the Co-Chairs, which was included on page 11 of members' packets. Page 12 was a copy of the original memo that was sent. *Linda Wolter made a motion that the Council approve the memo to be sent to the Director. Donsetta seconded. The motion carried.* Elizabeth will send the memo to the Director.

### **Adoptive Families Together Program**

Melissa Thomas and Marlanna Dokken spoke to the council about AFT's marriage enhancement programs for couples who have adopted. The curriculum provides fourteen training credits, and lodging and meals are provided. This is provided under the Adoptions Grant. They have 6 retreats planned for this year with a target of training 30 couples per year. They also offer several other trainings and supports, which were described in brochures that they distributed.

### **Proposed Revisions to Procedures 302.310, Adoption Assistance and 302.405 Subsidized Guardianship**

Elizabeth asked council members for any comments on the proposed changes. These procedures were revised to comply with previous changes in the corresponding rule, and include the elimination of procedures addressing suspension of payments in both the Adoption Assistance and the subsidized Guardianship programs. Federal regulations do not allow the Department to suspend payments. There were no comments from Council members. Elizabeth asked council members to email Terry with any comments by close of business Monday, February 9th. The Council would like the Office of Policy to come to talk about how they could take a more active role in policy.

### **Chapin Hall Report**

Elizabeth said that at the joint meeting with the SWFCAC, the Director asked both councils to review the Chapin Hall Report and make recommendations on how it could be used to improve practice. In response, a committee was formed, and Ray will ask SWFCAC members, at their February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, if they would like to provide members for a joint committee. AAC members who volunteered for the committee were: Pat Kelso, Julie Cebulski, Ruth Jajko, Dave Matthews, Karen Wardlaw, Tamara Guy, DeAudrey Davis and Linda Wolter.

Some of the comments made during the discussion of the report were as follows:

- \*The report contains no surprises.
- \*The recommendations made on p. 25-26 are very sound.
- \*May want to look at subsidy changes.
- \*Struggling – design some questions using the language they use. If struggling financially more children might cause more struggles. Clear red flags about what is going on in these families.
- \*Implies that those making more money are better parents.
- \*Sometimes it requires extra effort on the part of worker to make a stable placement work.
- \*Didn't include much about the size of the family.
- \*Foster parents develop skills – agencies have a tendency to slot them in a category and forget there is potential for growth.
- \*Many kids do come up for adoption. Foster parents need to be taught to be more self-sufficient for when adoption does occur, so that they know how to access necessary resources.
- \*Mentorship – pair advanced foster parent with child

### **Agenda for Next Meeting**

Farm Resource Center - Elizabeth asked council members to email Terry with any documentation on any good or bad experiences they have had with any of the APAL programs. Terry will also request data from Christine Feldman or June regarding all of the contracts.

Pat Kelso asked that adoptive parents be notified that the Post Adoption contact person has changed. In Central Region, some have been moved from Peoria to Springfield or Champaign. She said June had said they would do that but she hasn't seen a notice yet. Terry will send a reminder to June Dorn.

Elizabeth suggested that Diane Dominguez who is a consumer on the Residential Services Authority could be invited to speak to the council when they meet in Chicago.

Update on Adoption Celebration 2009

Feedback from Chapin Hall Study Committee

Feedback from Training Committee on list of adoption related trainings

DeAudrey said that kids are being moved from TPR to a goal of independence, instead of looking for adoptive placements, at age 15 and even as early as age 11 or 12. Elizabeth said we would ask June to address this.

Invite the Office of Policy to come to talk about how the Council could take a more active role in policy.

Invite Matt Grady to the next meeting to do the presentation he recently did at CWAC.

*Karen Wardlaw made a motion to adjourn. Donsetta Blakely seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.*