

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
May 20, 2005, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
160 N. LaSalle, Room N-505
Chicago, Illinois
APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff	Guests
Donsetta Blakely Ray Chasteen Heidi Darville Sylvia Flory Ruth Jajko James Jones Judith McAtee Andrea Miller Uli Senz Adrienne Welenc Mary White Geraldine Wilson	Gladys Boyd Claudia Davis Carolyn DePalma Vicky Kline Erma Lee	Janise Alston Mike Barry Arthur Bishop Jackie Bright Mattie Brown Michael Byrd Edith Cruz Mary Dyer William Fields Ray Gates John Horwath Vanessa James Terry McGlothlin Chris McGrath Rod Mulford Director Brian Samuels Bill Schnidt Velma Williams Liz Yore	Rachel Ash Cindy Backstein Mark Bouie Juanita Brocheit Olivia Brown Julie Dvorsky Geoff Franklin April Johnson Debra McGee Mary Sue Meshes Barbara Turner Jerry Welenc Vivian Willemsen

Hospitality

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

Welcome & Introductions

Adrienne Welenc thanked all for coming, and introductions were made.

Adrienne introduced Christine Feldman, Educational Advisor. Christine passed out an updated statewide list of Education Advisors and suggested that council members should call with any educational issues.

Adrienne said she did not have any administrative business to take care of, nor were there any Final Reports to the Director.

Minutes of 4/22/05 Meeting

Adrienne asked if anyone had any changes to the minutes of the last meeting. *A motion was made by Uli Senz to add to the minutes that the Adolescent Issues Subcommittee had previously been assigned to cover issues related to the Children & Youth with Sexual Abuse training curriculum. Mary White seconded. The motion carried.*

Election of Officers

Heidi Darville announced that there were no opposing candidates for Chair and Vice Chair. *Mary White made a motion that Adrienne be certified as elected as Chair and Claudia Davis be certified as elected as Vice Chair for FY06. Uli Senz seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed.*

Adrienne thanked the council for their integrity and for their willingness to give so much of their time to serve on the council.

Adrienne Welenc presented a plaque to Heidi Darville for her years of service on the council. Heidi's second and final term will expire June 30, 2005.

FY'06 Meeting Schedule

The FY'06 Meeting Schedule was set as follows:

July 15	Champaign
September 9	Joint Meeting with YAB - Location & time to be determined
October 21	Effingham
November 18	Adoption Celebration - Chicago - Time to be determined
January 20	Bloomington
March 17	Chicago
April 21	Springfield
May 19	Chicago - Award Presentations for Top 5 Foster Parent Law Plans

All meetings will be held from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee

Terry said that Gwenn Eyer had sent council members their typed implementation review notes and decisions on ratings to review before today's meeting, and council members were asked to sign off on those ratings at today's meeting. All in attendance signed for the reviews that they had conducted. *Heidi made a motion to accept the agency review results. Ruth Jajko seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

The Policy Committee will meet on June 9th to formulate an agenda for hosting 3 meetings with POS and DCFS agency foster parent law liaisons, and to discuss speaking points and handouts. The training will focus on how agencies are developing and implementing their plans and how to improve their annual reports. Two Policy Committee members and Ray Gates will conduct the training at each of three sites in Peoria, Chicago, and Mt. Vernon. Ray suggested that council members should attend these meetings in their area to let the agencies know who they are. Nancy Thompson is scheduling the trainings and will send the information out to all members when finalized. Ray said that this plan would need to be approved by Erwin McEwen, Arthur Bishop and Velma Williams.

There were some suggestions on the review process:

*Andrea said she reviews each response as the review is done so that the interviewee can agree with the response that she is writing down as they go. She paraphrases the response while it is fresh.

*Currently the final result is based on the highest number of Acceptable, Somewhat Acceptable, or Not Acceptable scores overall.

*If there are any disputes from agencies regarding their review it will be taken to the Policy Committee for resolution.

*When an agency fails a review, they must prepare a corrective action plan and submit it to the Council.

*At the next Policy Committee meeting there should be a discussion on:

-typed notes changing the tone/intent of the written notes

-giving each question a qualitative value in order to determine final result or create a rule to add up and average responses

*Andrea Miller said that she would email suggestions to the Policy Committee before their June 9 meeting.

Sylvia Flory made a motion that when an agency fails the review they have to do another full review the following year. Andrea Miller seconded. The motion carried.

Heidi Darville distributed a handout from the Child Care Association press conference about support for a 5% increase in the foster care board rate. ***Uli Senz made a motion to send a letter of approval and support from the council. Mary White seconded. The motion passed.***

Adolescent Issues - Andrea Miller reported no action since the last meeting.

Archives - Ray Chasteen

Ray reported that they are still collecting materials and need to meet to sort what materials they have.

Youth Advisory Board Liaison - Andrea Miller reported no action since the last meeting.

SASS

Donsetta Blakely reported that Cook North had a SASS presentation at their meeting and a new brochure was distributed. No other report on this committee.

FPSS - Adrienne Welenc

Adrienne reported that there was a conference call held on May 10th with 30-35 people on the call. Cook South did not have a representative on the call, although a staff person was invited. Michael Byrd asked to be added to the distribution list for future information on these meetings. Adrienne reported the following:

*Larry Chasey said there would be no cuts and no increases in the FPSS program for FY'06.

*The Union waived the FPSS contract from termination in December.

*Supervision of FPSS varies downstate, and in Cook the RDM supervises the FPSS.

*Northern Region currently does not have a Lead FPSS. FPSS are reporting to the Site Administrator, Don Vasich.

*Larry confirmed that when a FPSS leaves, the position can be filled or the funds used to increase the hours of the other FPSS for that region.

*Larry said that if FPSS do not have a computer ID, staff would enter their travel on the new computer travel program.

*Currently FPSS are only supposed to work with foster homes that have placements, but they have no way of knowing which foster homes those are. Larry said they would develop a protocol.

*Heidi suggested that FPSS be added to the PIP plan because DCFS is looking at placement stability, which seems to be affected by support provided.

PA92-0295 - Ray Chasteen

Ray reported no additional responses from committee members, and said there has been some reluctance from school administrators. Ray asked that there be a committee at large and any council members in the vicinity of a school that has received a report go and interview the school. Terry will request another list of schools that have received the reports and send it to all council members. Ray Chasteen will send everyone the list of interview questions. Christine Feldman recommended that members contact their Education Advisors to go with them. The Education Advisors already have a relationship with the schools, so it would be easier for them to set up the meeting.

Report from Other Councils - Janise Alston

Janise said that she would now be the coordinator for the SWFCAC, AAC & YAB.

Adoption Advisory Council

Janise reported that the AAC had not met since the last meeting that she reported on. Jim Jones said that the council will meet June 3rd in Bloomington, and Bobby Hall from DCFS will attend the meeting to discuss adoption grant opportunities. Ray Gates added that the AAC is seeking a stronger role in the Illinois Celebrates Adoption Event, and Diane Jackson has been invited to the meeting to discuss this.

Youth Advisory Board

They had their regional meeting last weekend. They worked on their emancipation portfolio, graduation ceremonies and the outline/layout of their newsletter.

Confidential Intermediary Committee

The Director selected a birth parent for their committee. The next meeting will be in the summer.

Child Welfare Advisory Council - Mary Dyer

Mary said CWAC met April 8th, and the new co-chair is Arlene Happach. The Director and Andrea Ingram reported on the Lifetime Approach, Integrated Assessment and Child & Youth Investment Teams. The council voted to change the name of the Public Education Subcommittee to the Public Awareness Subcommittee. The Training Subcommittee will offer continuing education units to staff that do trainings. The next

meeting is scheduled for May 25. The Intact Family Subcommittee is working on the program plan for services for intact families.

Sibling Rights

Michael Byrd reported that they had the first of five hearings. Hearings have been suspended because staff that records the hearings had schedule conflicts due to the legislature being in session. This will delay the final report that was due May 31. Senator Hunter applied for an extension and is waiting for a response.

Working Lunch - Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Awards to Agencies

Director Samuels and Deputy Director Velma Williams presented awards to the top 5 agencies and 1 DCFS Region that received the highest scores on their 2005 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans. Those agencies receiving awards were: DCFS Cook North, Beatrice Caffrey Youth Services, Hephzibah Children's Association, The Youth Campus, Catholic Charities-Rockford, and Catholic Charities-Chicago.

Status Report on Clothing Vouchers - Arthur Bishop/Bill Schmidt

Arthur Bishop led a discussion on the issue of clothing vouchers. He said he has been working on this issue since Adrienne became the chair of the council. He said that Bill Schmidt, Business Office Manager for downstate, has been working to speed up the reimbursement process. The issue with vouchers downstate is that stores will not take the voucher because of a slow reimbursement rate. Barb Piwowarski and Arthur have made resolution a priority. They will move that line out of the general revenue fund, which takes 30 days or longer for payment, to the Children's Services Fund, which pays more quickly, sometimes within two weeks. This is the proposal DCFS is making to the Bureau of the Budget for FY'06. If accepted, they can almost guarantee a 30-day payment period. The State's Prompt Payment Act would still have to be followed. With the prompt payment, they might be able to set up corporate accounts with stores. For example, Target would not accept the vouchers, but now there is a corporate account in place with them. Target submits an invoice with a purchase order to get payment. There are still some growing pains until they work the kinks out. Local stores don't know about the corporate accounts yet. There is a Target 800# if problems arise when shopping at Target. The 800# can fax the appropriate authorization. If this works with Target they will pursue it with other stores, such as Wal-Mart, Sears, Kmart, and Kohl's. These secondary vendors will be planned for this fall. Bill said if foster parents make an unauthorized purchase, the Department would recoup money from the foster parent via a letter, and then the board payment.

All of the above is relative only to DCFS foster parents. POS might possibly use if for replacement clothing vouchers only. Heidi & Sylvia brought up POS concerns regarding their inability to get foster parents' receipts so the agency can get reimbursement from DCFS. Agencies must get receipts from their foster parents in order to get reimbursed by DCFS.

There was discussion regarding a debit card/LINK system. This would cost too much to bring up, and it would have an ongoing maintenance/operation fee.

It was suggested that the cover letter state to vendors that it is ok to let purchasers spend more than the voucher and pay the difference. The quickest and easiest way is for the foster parent to pay up front and get reimbursed after submitting receipts.

Rule 402 - Ruth Jajko/Heidi Darville

Ruth & Heidi reported that while they had not been able to attend the meetings of this workgroup in Springfield, they had been in touch with them and received a written proposal they are working on regarding how to deal with families who are licensed, but have not taken a child for placement in some time. The proposed idea is to use the "independent foster home" language in the Child Care Act to deal with these families, thus making them independent of POS or DCFS monitoring, training, etc. This would alleviate the burden on agencies and DCFS for maintaining these families. If the families did want to take a placement, a monitoring visit would be needed before the placement could be made, and perhaps some other things as well. This is very much in the brainstorming phase so details of how this would work and exact rule changes are not known yet.

Mary White asked why we place pre-school kids in homes where foster parents work and thus we have to pay day care. Uli said it is poor resource management. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Report from Office of Foster Parent Support Services - Ray Gates

Ray reported that the four Caregiver Institutes went very well this year, and that we are requesting permission to plan for nine next year, 7 to be held in the old DCFS Subregions and 2 in Cook County.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.