

**Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
Approved MINUTES**

September 9, 2005 ~ 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Eastland Suites

1801 Eastland Drive, Bloomington, Illinois

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff	Guests
Gladys Boyd Donsetta Blakely Claudia Davis Sylvia Flory Ruth Jajko Vicky J. Kline Andrea Miller Uli Senz Adrienne Welenc Mary White	Ray Chasteen Carolyn DePalma James Jones Judy McAtee Geraldine Wilson	Jose Candelas Gwenn Eyer Ray Gates Bridgette Glickman Dr. SooMi Lee Mary Ozanich Velma Williams	Ruth Dominguez Cecil Garner Jerry Welenc

Hospitality

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

Welcome and Introductions

Adrienne called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. She welcomed members and guests, recognizing Ruth Dominguez, a potential member of the Council. Ruth introduced herself and stated that she is a foster parent, schoolteacher and college student. Ruth is from the Cook North region, and has been a foster parent for five years. Cecil Garner, another potential Cook North foster parent member, also introduced himself.

Administrative Business – None

Final Reports to the Director – None

NEW BUSINESS

Deputy Director’s Report – Velma Williams, Clinical Division

Ms. Williams' report centered on the state’s response to the recent hurricane disaster. She stated that the Governor has welcomed people effected by the Hurricane to Illinois and that there is a response team in every region including representatives from DPH, DCFS and DHS. DHS is the lead agency in coordinating the state’s efforts. She stated that the immediate need is to help 250 families and we will offer the following assistance: housing, enrollment in school, medical/clinical services. She stated that DCFS’s responsibility will be to serve children not accompanied by adults and that foster parents will be the first on-call group for providing temporary homes for these children and youth. She stated that the Department is working out what can be done to limit risk while also reducing bureaucratic red tape. She stated although some are with relatives other than parents, no unaccompanied children have arrived in Illinois to date. There are still

high numbers of children unaccounted for, so she indicated that we still might get some children who need temporary care.

Velma stated that the Department will partner with the foster family community to provide housing and will depend on families in regions where the children are arriving. She said that we must approach this as a long-term commitment to these families. Those foster parents interested in being considered for placements should call Tom Stewart, Director of Advocacy, at 217/524-2029. She stated that intake would be handled professionally and that calls will be taken seriously.

Adrienne Welenc, SWFCAC chair, asked Ms. Williams to immediately notify the Council as needs are identified.

Ms. Williams briefly discussed Integrated Assessment, stating that IA is up and running, and assessments are being completed for all children coming into care. She stated that Ray Gates and his staff have been doing foster parent orientations to explain the foster parent's role and to answer questions. She indicated that mental health providers are now able to see children before they have been in care for a long period of time. She said that we want to be proactive with IA and that we have been able to engage a good number of psychiatrists. She introduced Dr. SooMi Lee who will open a psychiatric clinic for our children coming into care.

Cook County Psychiatric Clinic – Dr. SooMi Lee, M.D. M.a.P.P.

Please see **attachment**: “Bringing it Together: Creating a Statewide Mental Healthcare Model”

Following her presentation Dr. Lee responded to questions, and stated that 3 days/week (40% of her time) will be dedicated to the foster care clinic. When asked if the research component will include information collected from foster parents she said that she'd like to do both qualitative and quantitative research. When asked about the location of the clinic she stated that it would start off only in Cook County. Deputy Director Velma Williams stated that the plan is to pilot it in Cook County this year, tweak the program, then go statewide within the next several years. Dr. Lee stressed that although the IA process will automatically refer to her clinic, if there is already an established clinical relationship it can be maintained. When asked about utilizing medical students as resources, Dr. Lee stated that residents in adult psychiatry would not have the required knowledge or skills for this program, so it would require fellows. Utilizing fellows from the two programs that offer fellowships in child psychiatry is a possibility. Dr. Lee stated that she is willing to report back to the Council in a year, and asked that members email questions about the program and questions about mental health in general to her at slee@idcfs.state.il.us.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes from the 7/15/05 meeting

Adrienne asked for corrections to the minutes. There were none offered. Uli Senz made the motion to accept the minutes as written. Claudia Davis seconded. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee – Uli Senz

Uli began by stating that he was not sure that participation in the open hearings is necessarily an official effort of the Policy Committee. However, Ray indicated that the chair assigned this task to the Policy Committee. Uli explained that it began more as an informal group of foster parents and experts sharing concerns regarding the policies. Ray stated that based on Tom Berkshire's advice and direction, the Council has been registered with Repr. Feigenholtz's office as an official organization to testify, and in addition to the chair, two members have been identified to testify. Uli contacted Marge Berglund with the Child Care Association, and she called back to say that they were going to participate, as well. Marge provided technical assistance to the SWFCAC group and they are preparing to testify. Although there are various issues being considered, this particular group indicated that they would focus only on board rates.

Hearing is scheduled:

Thompson Center, Room 16-503

September 14 10am – 2pm

Adrienne acknowledged the hard work of the committee and thanked them for their work. Ray stated that there have been discussions with Randy Wells regarding Rule 340. He indicated that there is little likelihood of amending the statute and rule this year.

Adolescent Issues – Andrea Miller

Andrea indicated that she is excited about the coming joint meeting with the Youth Advisory Board. She requested additional committee members join her for support and assistance in working with the youth. She stated that there were three slots on the task force, and requested that other SWFCAC members volunteer to assist. There was a brief discussion regarding the Sibling Rights Bill and Ray stated that perhaps there would be a report later during the combined meeting.

Archives – Jerry Welenc

Jerry reported that he, Ray Gates and Andrea Miller got together to sort and organize materials. There is more work to be done, but they have gotten a good start. The plan is to establish an archive for the Council that includes the early work that brought the Council into law. Once the archives are assembled and kept in a safe place it will be easily accessible for historical information. Jerry stated that JoAnn Flaherty has shared a number of her personal notes that give background information regarding the history of the Council.

System of Care/SASS – Uli Senz

Uli reported that the SASS stakeholders met this morning in Joliet. He stated that the group is redefining itself into an "issue-creating and approving" body, making decisions

on recommendations coming from its subcommittee, placing the main work into subcommittees with the stakeholders group having oversight.

Foster Parent Support Services – Vicky Kline

The subcommittee met earlier today. Jose Candelas, Associate Deputy Director for Operations in Cook County; Larry Chasey, Associate Deputy Director, Operations Downstate; Ray Gates; Vicky Kline and Adrienne Welenc participated. They reviewed the issues list submitted by Vicky Kline, subcommittee chair. Please see meeting notes **attached**.

- Donsetta Blakely questioned how POS agency workers (or directors) who are doing adoption home studies by contract with DCFS are doing so without having a conflict of interest. Jose indicated that they might not be in conflict.
- Mary White stated that FPSS's serve the foster parents, not foster children. In addition she stated that one Support Specialist is the only person available to support foster parents in a three-county area and that she and the Support Specialist were the only foster parent attendees at a recent meeting regarding the Foster Parent Law.
- Donsetta stated that she has a problem with the FPSS's ability to contact only homes with current placements, indicating that there's a problem when the only call she gets is for the placement of a child. She recommended that they make occasional courtesy calls to check in with all foster parents. Jose responded that the directive resulted from the perception that homes with children are losing necessary support when time is divided with homes without placements. He further stated that another issue is the need to have bilingual workers visit homes with children in care, and there is much more limited flexibility in scheduling and allotting time to all families. He stated that we are really trying to focus on homes that have children in care.
- Uli Senz asked why DCFS has the support of FPSS's but private agencies do not. Adrienne replied that it's due to early advocacy on the part of DCFS foster parents in the mid-80's. Jose stated that caseloads have dropped and now the workers are better able to divide their time to meet this need.

IAAC/SYAB/CWAC/CIAC/CFS – Bridgette Glickman

Bridgette submitted a written report (**attached**) on activities of other councils. Bridgette stated that Leshonda Rogers is the liaison with the Youth Advisory Board, so she may not have all of the current information regarding their work. She further stated that some of the past advisory boards that have been discontinued might be reinstated in the near future.

Employee Licensing Board Subcommittee – Uli Senz

The next meeting is next week in Chicago. The Illinois Child Welfare Licensure Board has revoked one license after following the appropriate procedure. They meet quarterly, with ad hoc teleconferences as needed. He stated that overall the most policy-relevant issue on the table is that they are working on enforcement of the CWEL licensing provisions. Uli stated that he has recommended that forms not institute policy, but that

forms follow policy. Mary White inquired as to where reports this committee receives come from. Uli responded that typically those reports come from the Office of the Inspector General.

Report from the Office of Foster Parent Support Services – Ray Gates

Clothing Voucher Issues

Ray said that Terry had checked on the status of this issue with Bill Schmidt, Business Office Administrator. Bill said that Target is the only store that has a corporate account at this time. They have tried to get other stores on board (specifically WalMart) but have not had any luck so far getting them to agree. Target, Kohls, Kmart, and Burlington will accept the vouchers, as well as some small vendors in certain areas. The DCFS proposal to the Bureau of the Budget to pay for the vouchers out of Children's Services Funds instead of General Revenue funds was approved. This means that vendors will be paid much quicker, possibly within 2 weeks, as opposed to 6 weeks+. Basically vendors are being paid more quickly, but they haven't been successful at getting new vendors. Bill said that he, Arthur, Barb and Marvin need to revisit this to see if there is anything else they can do that they haven't tried.

Jose' stated that in his business office the clothing vouchers have to be processed within 48 hours, 2 working days, just as the special exception vouchers are processed. When questioned by Gladys Boyd, he indicated that she could contact his office to work out back payment for clothing vouchers for a child or youth that has been in her care for more than a year. Ray suggested that Vanessa James include clothing voucher information as a one-column article in the next newsletter. Jose' Candelas stated that he would like to assist with the article.

Further discussion surrounded school issues around children in care, particularly some who seemed to be easily identified as foster children. Other comments had to do with ways to address safety issues for children in care when calling the Hotline seems ineffective.

PA92-0295 Records to Schools

Ray Gates stated that Terry McGlothlin sent Emails early this week to members of this committee, reminding them that they would be expected to report today. Terry provided responses she'd received. Ruth Jajko reported that she conducted an interview at Liberty Elementary in Carpentersville and that she has submitted her materials to Ray Chasteen. Vicky Kline reported that she had been unable to contact the Educational Advisor in her region, suggesting that perhaps the advisor had conducted interviews Vicky is unaware of. During the meeting Donsetta Blakely stated that she had reported in a past meeting regarding the four schools she interviewed early this year. Uli Senz questioned the purpose of doing the interviews. Ruth Jajko stated that we need more clarity in the purpose of this task. The chair stated that at this time no interviews should be conducted until the mission has been clarified and asked for a volunteer to co-chair this committee. The chair appointed Mary White, with Ruth Jajko as a backup if Mary is unable to serve. Mary accepted the responsibility.

Review Tracking Chart

The Task Chart was reviewed. Updates will be made and distributed at the next meeting.

Update on Caregiver Institutes – Gwenn Eyer

Gwenn reported that plans are underway for nine Caregiver Institutes scheduled for late winter and spring 2006. Regional one-day trainings are planned, with an emphasis on teamwork. The day will tentatively open with testimonials of two youth who have gone down different paths with different permanency goals, followed by a story from a foster parent. We plan to have a “State of the Department” presentation, given by the RA, with an overview of the lifetime approach and new Department initiatives. Workshops will focus on examining the caregiver role, emphasizing advocacy and offering a motivational and empowering approach. The afternoon will focus on self-sufficiency and lifeskills development for youth in care. Ray shared a copy of the conference program cover, showing the logo for the conference. The holiday issue of *Illinois Families Now and Forever* will contain the registration information.

Next Meeting/Agenda

- Report regarding restructuring the Independent Living program
- CAYIT
- Licensing update regarding the revamped 402 – Steve Minter
- Bill Peyton may discuss Foster Parent Law training in Southern Region, which includes vignettes and roleplays.

Closing Issues

Ruth made the motion for adjournment, Mary White seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Joint Meeting with the Youth Advisory Board convened at 8:30 p.m.

FPSS Committee Meeting. 9/9/05
Eastland Suites, Bloomington

Present – Adrienne Welenc, Vicky Kline, Jose Candelas, Larry Chasey, Ray Gates, by phone, Joyce Loy

Issue #1 – Supervision

Larry pointed out that the FPSS program plan/contract guides what FPSS are supposed to do. Joyce said that in Central Region, staff who supervise FPSS appear to be too overwhelmed to provide supervision. Vicki pointed out issues that suggest supervisors in Southern Region aren't sure about the particulars of this supervision. Larry said he would talk with Bill Peyton and Operations' management in the Southern Region. He also pointed out that supervisors might change when the re-org is complete.

Issue #2, 3 and 5 – Use of FPSS Contract Funds

Larry said that he and Arthur had spoken with Royce and other downstate contract staff about replacing FPSS who left or adding the hours of those who left onto existing FPSSs if they would pick up additional coverage. Larry will get a list of the FPSS contracts for this fiscal year and check on these issues. Larry will share that list with all of us.

Larry noted that Aubin knows that she is supposed to replace FPSSs who left, or reallocate their hours among others. He also explained that regions could decide to move FPSS funds from one location in order to use them in another location, based on need. All areas may no longer be covered by FPSS services.

Larry asked everyone to send him specifics where FPSS money is not being used, and he will follow up.

It was pointed out that there are no leads in East St. Louis Metro and Northern and Central Regions. Larry explained that Central Region chose to use FPSS direct service instead of lead service in order to provide the maximum number of direct service hours to support foster parents.

Issue #4 -- Notifying FPSSs of Every Placement

Larry and Jose will notify Operations' management that FPSSs must be notified as soon as possible each time a placement has been made.

There was a question about FPSSs serving DCFS homes caring for children placed by POS agencies. Larry and Jose said that FPSSs are not to be supporting foster parents' work with children placed in DCFS homes by POS agencies. After some discussion Larry and Jose agreed that there could be situations where both DCFS and POS children are placed in a DCFS foster home, suggesting that FPSSs could work with the foster parents around issues affecting all of these children. They will discuss with Arthur and others and provide clarification on this question. They think that the clarification will state that FPSSs should not work with DCFS foster parents caring only for children

placed by POS agencies. This is to insure that the limited FPSS funds are used to provide maximum support for DCFS children placed in DCFS homes. Stand by for clarification.

Conflict of Interest

Joyce spoke of some FPSSs in Central Region who may also be working as family educators in a mental health program under contract through another agency. Larry asked Joyce to send him the specifics on each situation. Larry will follow up with the Department's Ethics Officer. Larry encouraged others who know of these types of situations to send him the particulars.