

**Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting
MINUTES
September 7, 2007
Pere Marquette Hotel – Peoria, Illinois
3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Approved as Amended at 10/19/07 Meeting**

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff	Guests
Mercedes Ball Angela Barber Gladys Boyd Robyn Harvey Ruth Jajko Birdia Jenkins Sheila Jones Nancy Lauffenberger William Miller Leanne Montgomery Ramon Nieves Rolinda Robinson Heather Schumacher Uli Senz Patricia Welander	Tonya Duke Debbie Freke Cecil Garner Adrienne Welenc	Gwenn Eyer Ray Gates Vanessa James Debra Kinsey Terry McGlothlin Marilyn Peebles Genene Taylor	Sharon Brooks Linda Sharp-Lower

Hospitality

Leanne Montgomery welcomed members and guests, stating that this meeting will be recorded to assure accurate minutes.

Welcome and Introductions

Uli Senz, SWFCAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. He asked members to introduce themselves, with special attention given to new member introductions. Uli announced, with regret, that new member Debbie Wilson has resigned for personal reasons. He stated that another new member, Steve Steinhardt from the Southern Region, has been appointed and will begin his SWFCAC service at the end of September, due to a prior commitment. Steve and Sheila also serve on CWAC.

Final Reports to the Director, Uli Senz

Uli referenced his monthly reports to the Director, which are included in the packet.

NEW MEMBERS:

Central Region, Sheila Jones

Sheila is a Program Coordinator at Catholic Charities, Peoria. She has worked in the human service field for approximately 25 years and in child welfare for the past 13 years. She currently works for the Catholic Charities Diocese of Peoria, as Foster Care Site Supervisor for the first 8 years, and as Foster Care Program Coordinator, assisting and training foster care supervisors for the past 2 years.

Southern Region, William Miller

William is a Foster Parent Support Specialist, and has served as a foster parent for nine years. He is a pastor and runs *Community Outreach*, a service for low-income families that also serves foster parents. He is very active with his local foster parent groups.

Draft Contagious/Infectious Diseases Document - Debra Kinsey

Debra introduced Marilyn Peebles, downstate project coordinator. She distributed two draft documents for review and comment. They have asked for comments to be returned to Terry by Friday, September 21st. Debra described the development of this project, indicating that issues came from a local level to the statewide office regarding how staff deal with communicable diseases within the client population. Her office also deals with projects around accreditation. They put together a work group including Department staff from several different areas to address these issues. They have compiled a draft protocol, which has gone out through the Department's internal review and comment process. Prior to that, they've worked on drafting content for the Foster Parent Handbook, using a piece of the information that was included in administrative rule and procedures. They have worked very closely with the Dept. of Public Health, utilizing them as a resource and reviewer. *Avoiding Germs* was designed to be included in the Foster Parent Handbook, and a brochure entitled *Clean Hands, Healthy Families!* has also been developed. These documents address universal precautions as well as case specific recommendations.

Debra addressed one question that came up during the development of the brochure: *How will foster parents get specialized supplies, i.e., disposable gloves?* Answer: In a traditional care situation, funding will be provided through a special service fee. Specialized foster homes will need to pay from the child's board payment. The medical card may cover gloves, when required. A council member requested that this information be included in the brochure and handbook. Vanessa will also provide information in *Illinois Families Now and Forever*.

Licensing: Backlog of Background Checks, Genevieve Taylor

Genevieve acknowledged that the Licensing office has faced serious issues and a tremendous backlog since the Adam Walsh Law passed last October. In January they had to order 1200 FBI checks to catch up on all of the people who had applied since October. (They must go through both State Police and FBI checks.) The State Police and FBI had new equipment and needed time to "get the bugs worked out." They have made changes at Central Office and anything that can be done without manual intervention is being done to move things along. Genevieve is confident that they are heading the right direction. She stated that there are always exceptions and some cases require special consideration. They have to deal with manually processing applications for anyone with a criminal history and/or child abuse history. They are not allowed to give the "rap sheet" to the agencies to evaluate, but instead, they gather the information and provide it to agencies via form letters. She said that if everything works correctly, fingerprints should be cleared within two weeks from the time one is fingerprinted if there is no criminal history. However, the application must be received in Springfield to find cleared prints. Their reporting system has been refined to filter statistics to see patterns and address problems more quickly.

PROCESS: Person goes to vendor to be fingerprinted → Vendor electronically transfers file to Illinois State Police (also order FBI right away) → Reports: rejected, reprinted, or error out

Current statistics:

Pending Foster Home Renewals = 4020 people currently required to have a background check.

Pending New Foster Home Applications = 4668

IFAPA FY'09 Conference – Gladys Boyd

Gladys stated that she, as president of IFAPA, and DCFS Acting Director McEwen are partnering in giving this conference. The conference is proposed to be held October 23-26, 2008, at the Marriott Oak Brook. She stated that they have had their first planning meeting in cooperation with the DCFS Office of Foster Parent Support Services. Gladys said they are looking for volunteers to provide support throughout the conference. The conference budget will provide lodging and most meals. Theme – *No Parent Left Behind: Bringing Unity to Illinois; Building New Bridges Together*. Free IFAPA memberships will be offered to all attendees.

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

- Ray distributed the memo announcing the appointment of Mike Ruzicka as the Acting Administrator of the South Region.
- DCFS Budget – took a \$4 million cut, but that was an addition to this year's budget, so overall, we are at the same budget as last year.
- We are planning four one-day Caregiver Institutes and two two-day conferences. Institutes may focus on trauma, its impact on children, and things foster parents can do to remediate that impact.
- Illinois Celebrates Adoption – we are still working on the plan to join with a film company to promote a movie as we celebrate adoption month.
- Amendment to Foster Parent Law, Right 7.5 – Information the Policy Committee developed guided Ray's work with the Policy Office to develop the new policy guide. This new guide should go out very soon.

REGIONAL REPORTS

Cook North, Nancy Lauffenberger

Nancy has been trying to conference in to meetings, but has been unable to access any meetings that may have been held. She has tried to gather information, but has been unable to do so. Terry will connect her with Acting Regional Administrator Jackie Bright.

Cook Central, Rolinda Robinson

Their meeting was focused on education and they had Dawn Overend from Education Services attend with two of her staff members. Children attended and they were divided into groups. They addressed the topic, "10 Ways to be Successful in School"

Cook South, Angela Barber

Angela stated that Ray Gates attended their last meeting to do a training about their implementation plan. She stated that they're now working on their 2008 plan.

Northern Region, Robyn Harvey

After taking the summer off, they're scheduling meetings in locations throughout the region. Arthur Bishop will attend in October to do a sort of "Hot Topics" presentation. They're busy working on their implementation plan.

Southern Region, William Miller

Southern Region has been conducting quarterly conference calls. They are planning their Foster Parent Law training program and they will soon begin their implementation plan meetings. They will use smaller work groups prior to convening the whole plan committee.

Central Region – Patty Welander

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

Reunification Initiative

Ruth referenced a Peggy Slater document she'd seen, "Model of Training, Supporting and Working with Parents" that focuses on education.

Policy Committee

Heather distributed notes from the last committee meeting and the draft "Changes in the Foster Parent Code" Policy Guide. She noted that the second document is much more specific than the first. Ray stated that the initial policy guide came out and included all of the basic information. However, more specificity is needed to help regions and agencies develop their implementation plans. Page 3 includes the information the Policy Committee promoted for inclusion.

Discussion of Committee Recommendations:

- Need to go longer than one-year break between terms due to the perception of being a "closed" group.
- Need rationale behind foster parent CWAC membership slot

Committee Recommendation: Council members that have already served two three-year terms would have the ability to be reappointed, after one year off the council, to serve another two 3-year terms. **Vote: For: 5; Opposed – 3; Abstain – 7. Committee recommendation was voted down.**

Motion: Robyn Harvey moved that the council members that have already served two three-year terms would have the ability to be reappointed, after two years off the council, to serve another two 3-year terms. Ruth Jajko seconded. **The motion carried by majority vote.**

Committee Recommendation: Abolish the required slot for the Cook County Foster Parent Advisory Council Chair. **Vote: The motion was rejected**

Committee Recommendation: Change CWAC foster parents to foster parents at Large. Withdrawn.

The Policy Committee was asked to revisit the issues that were rejected and report at the October meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes from July 20, 2007 SWFCAC Meeting

Uli asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes from the July 20th meeting.

MOTION: Ramon Nieves made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Patricia Welander seconded. The minutes were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Adolescent Issues/ Statewide Youth Advisory Board Liaison – Robyn Harvey
No report.

Resource Family Subcommittee – Ruth Jajko

The work of this committee appears to be completed for now. This committee report agenda item will be removed.

Legislative Subcommittee – Ruth Jajko

Ruth reported that the Governor signed the budget, stating that the DCFS budget is fairly flat with no major cuts. She also stated that a lot of the programs that are being discussed as “pork” in the press really should not be classified as such.

Public Act 95-0144 – Supplemental Appropriations Bill – this gave the legislators a raise.

Senate Bill 121 – Amendments to the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry was vetoed by the Governor. There may be an attempt by Speaker Madigan to override the veto.

The Kinship Caregiver Support Act will be addressed in depth at the next meeting.

Training – Debbie Freke

Debbie's written report was included in member packets.

Foster Parent Support Specialists

No Report

Archives – Patricia Welander

Patty reported that plans are in place to transfer files to her. She also reported plans are underway to digitize the files for easy storage and retrieval via the Internet.

Future Policy and Practice Committee – Robyn Harvey

Robyn did not participate in the last meeting and has not been copied on past meeting minutes. Ray reported that in addition to foster parents, the other stakeholder group they'd like to include is parents. There are a couple of Cook County parents that may be invited to participate. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday. That group will be the funnel through which all policy and practice has to go before making it to the Director. Ray asked Terry to connect Robyn with co-chair Joyce Bryan.

Adoption Day Celebration – Ramon Nieves

Ramon stressed the importance of scheduling the event as soon as possible and stressed the need to hold a follow up conference call.

MOTION: Ramon Nieves made the motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Patricia Welander.

The next meeting will be October 19th at the Alton Holiday Inn.