

**STATEWIDE FOSTER CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL
APPROVED MINUTES
APRIL 15, 2011 - 9 A.M. - 3 P.M.
Holiday Inn Express, 2501 Holiday Lane, Jacksonville, IL**

SWFCAC - PRESENT		SWFCAC - ABSENT	DCFS STAFF	GUESTS
Carlos Argueta	Sheila Jones	Irma Dixon	Gwenn Eyer	Jeremy Boudreaux
Mercedes Ball	Kathleen Lutz	Debbie Freke	Ray Gates	Kent Coffman
Angela Barber	Cathy McCoy	Amy Garcia	Shaun Lane	Carol Lichtensteiger
Gladys Boyd	Bill Moorehead	Leanne Montgomery	Jean Maher	
Lee Coffman	Rolinda Robinson		Kim Peck	
Edith Cruz	Heather Schumacher			
Andrew DeLao	Michael Simpson			
Kelly Green	Steve Steinhardt			
Robyn Harvey	Danny Tolliver			
Birdia Jenkins				

Welcome & Introductions – Birdia Jenkins

Birdia welcomed council members and guests. She asked that everyone put their cell phones on silent and to step out in the hall to take calls or have side-bar conversations. Members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes from 3/18/11 Meeting - Council

Sheila Jones made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Danny Tolliver seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Final Reports to Director – Angela Barber

Angela said that a copy of the April monthly report to the Director had been sent to all council members.

Report from Division of Service Support - Shaun Lane

Budget – This is the kind of interlude that happens prior to the end of the budget session. There continue to be debates, but we don't expect to really hear anything back until near the end of May. There is no substantive new information to share at this time. The overall economic status of the state is critical at this time.

HB1354, the State Prompt Payment Act, states that if a bill goes unpaid after 60 days it requires interest to be paid.

Juvenile Justice – The intention at this point is that the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) continue as a stand-alone state agency that will receive supports from other state agencies, including DCFS.

SWFCAC – Shaun commended the Council for their work scoring implementation plans and conducting agency reviews, noting the importance of this work as well as its time-consuming nature.

Update on National Youth in Transition Database – Kim Peck

Kim distributed and discussed a one-page information sheet on the National Youth in Transition Database. Around the year 2000 the government passed the Chaffee Act with funds that support our programs for older youth. One stipulation is that recipients must report case-level information on youth and the independent living services they receive from the state. The reporting piece went into effect at the beginning of the last federal fiscal year. Kim noted that foster parents may be asked to help assist in the reporting.

They are also looking at outcomes. Any youth that turns 17 during Federal Fiscal Year 2011 (10/01/2010 – 09/30/2011) must complete an outcome survey which is then entered into SACWIS. The first six-month reporting period has been completed. Survey completion is critical, and overdue surveys may result in financial penalties. The 17-year-olds currently surveyed will be revisited at ages 19 and 21. The results should eventually demonstrate that services support more positive outcomes for youth. Discussion: *Does this apply to every youth?* No, only those youth whom the Department has legal guardianship over have to complete the outcome survey. *Shouldn't foster parents be involved?* This is currently a worker responsibility, but we may consider utilizing foster parents to support the effort, especially during the follow up.

After her presentation Kim distributed Save-the-Date flyers for the upcoming Youth Summits and graduation celebration announcements.

Discussion: Member Lee Coffman asked about a scholarship issue that came up for their adopted daughter who is currently in college. She stated that when it got down to it they returned her daughter's packet because she hadn't taken standard college entrance exams, yet there is conflicting information in DCFS policy about whether that is mandatory to be considered for a scholarship.

Kim stated that 48 scholarships are awarded annually. She reviewed the current policy and discussed the way the information is transmitted on an annual basis. Kent Coffman, a guest from Central Region, addressed the council, stating that their family had taken this issue up the chain of command. Kim indicated that based on their appeal, the Coffman's daughter's application was accepted this year despite her not having taken one of the standardized college entrance exams. She also noted that they are forming a work group to revisit the overall application process. *Angela Barber, SWFCAC Chair, asked for Kim's approval and then stated that the SWFCAC would form an ad hoc committee to support their division's work in reviewing and possibly revising the procedures that govern the application process.

Report from the Office of Training – Jean Maher

Jean reported that the Foster/Adopt PRIDE curriculum is currently under revision, and a May 20th Training of Trainers will be conducted via video conference. (Support staff will be trained earlier in May.)

Online Adoption Certification Training – A council member noted that there are not enough Adoption Conversion trainings being held to meet the needs of those who wish to adopt prior to the end of the fiscal year, especially in Cook. Jean indicated that additional sites are being secured and that classes are being scheduled based on the number of referrals. The online version of Adoption Certification Training is in final production. The online training content includes additional information and links to replace some of the activities conducted as part of the current classroom training. We are unsure when it will be up and running – possibly as early as summer. Online training is intended for those who can't

attend the classroom sessions, and this training will prevent families from having to wait. The Office of Training also provides links to outside online training. *Shaun suggested that the council might address ways to increase access to pre-service training. Kelly stated that she would like to see pre-service training continue to cover adoption issues. She expressed concern that she has had to repeat the adoption conversion training when she adopted a second time. Jean said that once foster parents have taken Adoption Certification training as part of the adoption process, they don't need to take it again if they adopt another child. Gwenn stated that "in the old days" *pre*-adoption training was offered and with the concurrent planning model it makes sense to go back to that pattern.

Registration Issues

Robyn Harvey asked about some of the challenges PRIDE trainers are facing with training rosters. Jean stated that they are restructuring some of the duties handled by the registration clerks to ensure better service delivery. She described the registration process and noted the overwhelming amount of work the unit does as they register for the many trainings that are conducted through DCFS.

There was a question about FP Training Credit Approval forms and the amount of time it takes to get them approved and hours earned added to a FP's VTC transcript. She stated that the Training Office Administrator has changed their system for processing these forms and this work is currently caught up on training credit input. Training approvals are being funneled to PRIDE regional managers who forward to the Chicago office upon approval where it is then input into the VTC. Jean stressed the importance of having outside trainings pre-approve training credit in advance of conducting the training. She also noted that the training approval form has been revised. Training that is approved has to tie to one of the PRIDE Competencies, so it is possible that some things that have been approved in the past will no longer be approved.

Report from Office of Caregiver & Parent Support - Ray

PWP Annual Summit in Morton

Ray said that the SWFCAC will join in the Partnering with Parents Annual Summit to be held at the Best Western Ashland House on May 12th in Morton. The council will reserve 9am – 10am for committee meetings. At 10am all council members will join the Summit, and will stay until it ends at 3pm.

The Summit will open with a possible brief presentation by the Director. Diane Zosky will do an educational presentation on how domestic violence affects children, and then all will participate in table discussions. After a networking lunch, a Recovery Group panel presentation will be followed by regional report-outs. Ray stated that every year for the first three years the Partnering with Parents Report-Outs have been a primary component of the day's presentations. This year the committee has asked that SWFCAC also provide a report. *Angela will review the committee makeup to assign meetings for the morning before the start of the Summit.

Implementation Reviews – Ray commended the council for their work conducting agency reviews. He mentioned some challenges, but noted that council members have been working together to meet the challenges.

Medicaid Issue – Ray reflected on the joint meeting with Adoption Advisory Council where there was discussion about the Affordable Care Act (PA111-148) regarding expanded insurance care for Americans. It does not specifically provide for adopted children to continue to get Medicaid until age 26. A letter was sent to Bryan Samuels and the response stated that it is not in the law and we should

take other steps to make our legislators aware of the issue. Ray said that Ruth Jajko was going to Email Marge Berglind at the Child Care Association to address the issue. Ray also contacted Dana Yowell and she replied that the Governor's Office has a legislative liaison in DC and she forwarded an Email to the liaison. The liaison checked with some folks in DC and reported that this is an issue that may only be addressed through a legislative amendment. CMS in Washington, DC, has been charged with writing the rules to implement the law, but absent legislation including Medicaid until age 26 for children who have been adopted, these young people will not be covered. This backs up the information provided by the Administration of Children and Families

Implementation Plan Awards

Ray sent out awards letters to Seguin Services, Kemmerer Village and Hephzibah, inviting them to our June 10 awards presentation. The letter requested executive summaries, which will be posted on the web site.

Illinois Respite Coalition Summit

Ray stated that he attended the Summit and noted that Gladys Boyd reached out to foster parents and filled a bus with foster parent attendees, thanking her for that work. Ray highly recommended the keynote presenter as a future presenter for conferences, etc., and he discussed the program from the Summit. He said that the Illinois Respite Coalition is a grassroots organization that has a lot of passion and perseverance as they work hard to promote Lifespan Respite.

Archives Committee

Ray was asked at the last meeting to get together with Patti Welander regarding the archives committee. Robyn reported that Patti has everything scanned and ready to transfer to whatever final form the council wants. Andrew DeLao, Mary White and Robyn Harvey will also be on the committee.

Committee Reports:

Archives – See Ray's report. A meeting will be scheduled.

Kinship Care

Gladys stated that she would like to step down as chair. *Cathy McCoy will now chair this committee.

FPSS Committee - Andrew DeLao

Andrew suggested that we retain this committee while they continue to *draft a letter with recommendations to go to the Director.

Legislation - Sheila Jones

HB 82 would amend the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 to provide for children who have committed a crime. If a child commits a crime that would be a misdemeanor for an adult, the child cannot just be sent to DJJ. Now they will look at it and send into a more alternative setting. The Judiciary Committee referred it back to the Rules Committee.

HB87 would increase the minimum age of a delinquent minor in detention from the current 10 years of age to 13 years of age. The Judiciary Committee referred it back to the Rules Committee.

House Resolution 110 estimates revenues for the coming year will be 33.2 billion, \$700 million less than Gov. Quinn's projections.

House Resolution 158, adopted in the House 03/30/11, directs any surplus revenue the state brings in during 2012 to paying unpaid obligations. Sheila thanked Gladys Boyd for emailing her this information.

Parent Café Design Team - Angela Barber

No official report. It was noted that Strengthening Families Illinois is partnering with Family Focus to conduct cafes, and they have approximately five going on right now.

Training - Mercedes Ball

Mercedes deferred to Jean Maher's earlier report.

Public Relations - Leanne Montgomery

No Report due to Leanne's absence.

Respite – Angela Barber

No action has been taken, due to budget constraints. Angela stated that it was under consideration to table both the Respite and Foster Parent Support Specialists committees for the time being. Robyn asked that this be delayed until we have an official response to the council's recommendations. Heather reminded the council that Shaun Lane's official response has been that respite is not expanding at this time, and specialized agencies are being held more accountable for the way they are utilizing respite. It was suggested that Shaun address in more detail at a future meeting. Ray said all that can be reported has been reported. Robyn acknowledged the work of the committee and said that it is very important to retain this recommendation, protecting it for a future time when the budget opens up.

Adolescent Issues/YAB - Angela Barber

No report. Kim Peck reported on the upcoming Regional Youth Summits.

Policy Committee - Heather Schumacher

No report.

Step-Down – Andrew stated that the committee has discussed training foster parents to better prepare them for step-down, but the committee believes it is very important to also better prepare the children for a successful transition. Dr. Mann and Cheryl Lawrence participated in their recent committee call, but it was established that other staff might be better prepared to address the committee's questions. Andrew stated that they have formulated a number of questions and a follow-up meeting has been scheduled with Deputy Kara Teeple to address their questions. Mayra Burgos-Biott has also been invited to participate in the call on Tuesday, April 19 at 2:00p.m. Steve Steinhardt stated that they are having a statewide meeting that morning with regard to step-downs, possibly including the opportunity for matches. They are working on a plan to increase success by making the process as seamless as they can.

Caregiver Institutes

Ray said that the Institutes have been completed and evaluations reflected high ratings. The youth panel presentations were changed this year and we had a mixture of veteran youth and several new and younger youth. (This reflects recommendations from last year's evaluations.) Michael Simelton, one of the veteran panelists, stepped up to be moderator during the third and fourth panels and will continue to do so next year. His background and experience served all well and was well received. Discussion:

Get the Psychological First Aid training from the institutes, Trauma Training 101, and Trauma Training 102 rolled out to support foster parents, especially those working with step-downs. Robyn recommended that Training take a look at offering the presentation that was used at Caregiver Institutes as an in-service module for foster parents.

Parents and Caregiver Partnership

No report.

Nominations and Elections

Of those qualified to run for office the following have been nominated:

Chair: Angela, Gladys and Andrew. Gladys withdrew her nomination from the chair position.

Vice Chair: Gladys, Andrew, Mercedes and Angela. Angela withdrew her nomination for Vice Chair. Ballots, along with deadlines, will be distributed prior to the next meeting.

Reports from Other Councils/ Committees

IFAPA – Gladys Boyd

Gladys reported that there will not be an IFAPA Conference this year. However, IFAPA will sponsor the National Foster Parent Association Training and Education Annual National Conference June 14-17, 2012 at the Marriott Oak Brook Hills Resort. Gladys reported that she is working with the national association to plan the conference, as well as with DCFS and the goal is to have DCFS provide funds to support the attendance of Illinois caregivers. Ray stated that the Department is currently able to commit to supporting conference registration fees for 100 Illinois foster parents at a lower rate he negotiated with their conference coordinator. Gladys stated that she is asking the Director for a commitment of funds to lodge several hundred Illinois caregivers. It is her expectation that those foster parents will pay their own conference registration fees at \$140 per person, a lower rate she negotiated with the national conference coordinator. Ray noted that Illinois DCFS will be involved peripherally with recommending speakers and possible exhibits.

UIC Steering Committee – Rolinda has asked that someone replace her on this committee. Their next meeting is scheduled for April 21st from 11:30-1pm. Rolinda said the April meeting is the last meeting for this group and then they will graduate. Heather indicated that there was some concern as to the need to maintain this committee. Robyn stated that the public relations component is an important part of the council's work and perhaps this committee involvement should be maintained in order to promote partnerships with the council. In addition, having a foster parent involved in the committee is of benefit to the group. *Kelly Green agreed to step in.

CWAC Training Committee

Robyn attends when the content impacts foster parents, and has not attended recently.

NEW BUSINESS

Regional Reports:

Cook North - Edith Cruz

Edith said they are still setting up their Lending Library and they are trying to get two going in Cook North. The Foster Parent Appreciation celebration will be a dinner, combining both the northern and southern parts of the region. The association is not meeting this month due to spring break. During their Tuesday regional meeting Jane Hastings discussed SASS and SOC. Edith noted that Jane both delivered information and took back information.

Cook South - Angela Barber, Danny Tolliver

Their meeting will be held next week.

Cook Central - Birdia Jenkins, Rolinda Robinson

Rolinda reported that they met March 27th. One presenter discussed the kids in special education and finding educational services. Birdia stated that representatives from the Alternative Schools Network shared the available programs on the west side. She noted that there are many incentives to encourage youth to attend school. Their next meeting is April 26th with Yazmina Sefiane.

Northern - Cathy McCoy, Debbie Freke

Cathy reported that they met and had training with Holly Bitner regarding FAFSA and the DCFS Scholarship Program.

Southern - Andrew DeLao, Michael Simpson

Andrew said they will meet May 17th so they have no report until then. They just sent out letters for the Foster Parent Appreciation Event next month. He described two cases that have caused grave concern within their region. These issues have been presented to management within the region and they are waiting to see what the outcome will be.

Central - Leanne Montgomery, Bill Moorehead, Lee Coffman

They have not held any meetings. Lee reported on information presented at the Caregiver Institute. There will be a telephone conference on April 22nd.

Adjourn

Andrew made a motion to adjourn. Sheila seconded. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Next Meeting: 10 am – 3 pm on May 12, 2011 in Morton for the Partnering with Parents Summit. The next regular meeting of the SWFCAC will be June 10th, at the Marriott Oak Brook.