

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
160 N. LaSalle, Room N502
Chicago, IL
April 4, 2003
10:00 – 3:00
Approved June 6, 2003

Members Attending:

Sharon Ami
Diana Chaytor
Arthur Davis
Zee Davis
Mary Debose
Diane Dominguez
Gwenn Eyer
Brian Hall
Tammy Hay
Jeanne Howard
James C. Jones
Susane Loss
David Matthews
Marilyn Panichi
Elizabeth Richmond
Terry Solomon

Members Absent:

James Ami
Patricia Cooper
Claudia Davis
Ronald Davis
JoAnn Flaherty
Diana Hinshaw
Tharecea Jackson
Vance Johnson
Gigi Lambert
Gretchen Schulert
Joyce Scott
Cleo Terry
Carol Winn

Guests:

Cindi Bradley
for Dr. Blasingame
Jackie Sharp for
Barbara Jones-Green
Nancy Golden for
Gretchen Schulert
Yolanda Green
Bernadine Spitz
Michael Courtwright

DCFS Staff

Joan Nelson Phillips
Ray Gates
Judy Pence
Terry McGlothlin
June Dorn
Peggy Slater
Vanessa James
Director McDonald
Kay Clark

Metropolitan Older Caregiver Project

June introduced Linda Wolter from Metropolitan. She gave a history of the project, currently in its third year and serving about 45 families annually. She said about half of the families move on to permanency after services are put into place. She distributed information on the program. (Handout A)

June Dorn said that Metropolitan has been reviewing homes with caregivers over age 70 that have small children. Some of those families are now on a waiting list to receive services from Metropolitan.

Policy Regarding Placements With Older Caregivers

Marilyn Panichi from AICI said they still refer people over 65 for licensing and they can still be licensed, although agencies are reluctant to license them. She suggested that policy to clarify this be sent to agencies as soon as possible.

Elizabeth said the Policy Committee met after the last meeting and had sent a letter from the Council to the Office of Child and Family Policy. (Handout B)

Art Davis made a motion that a clarification guide on Rule 301 and the PG 2003.1 Placement Restrictions on Older Caregivers come as soon as possible. Diane Dominguez seconded. Motion carried.

Elizabeth said that Director McDonald agreed to have Mary Sue Morsch head up a committee comprised of members of each foster/adoptive parent group and that they would meet in the next couple weeks.

Report of FY03 Post Adopt Expenditures

June Dorn distributed figures depicting expenditures for subsidies and services over the past five years, broken down by region. The handout also included adoption preservation funding by agency. (Handout C) She also passed out numbers of Adoption Assistance cases (Handout D), and a map depicting how the adoption and guardianship preservation providers are broken out. (Handout E)

There was concern that there is not enough focus on post adoption issues and that DCFS focuses more on foster care. June said that a member of the task force that is reviewing DCFS did meet with her and Legertha Barner and he was very supportive of the post adoption & guardianship program.

Jeanne Howard said the federal government supports foster care and not post adoption services, therefore while it looks like we should have a big savings in foster care, and there is, it cannot be used for adoption services. Art said that the Council needs to lobby with whoever has the purse and that the federal government needs to be made aware of where the needs are. Jeanne suggested that we occasionally invite federal representatives to our meetings to talk about the funding issue. Senator Durbin has expressed some interest. Terry Solomon said the decisions rest with the President, HHS and Administration for Children and Families. She said we have been working with Congressman Danny Davis regarding primarily subsidized guardianship and there are more discussions going on. She said the Task Force has received information from all across the state from different interest groups and are supposed to issue their report by April 10th. Post permanency services are to remain a priority. Art said unless you go out to the source of the decision-making, efforts toward change won't be effective.

Gwenn said we are in an advisory position to the Director, rather than a lobbying group. Elizabeth said that lobbying would be a more appropriate role for the IFAPA and COAC groups. Diane said we need a task force of adoptive parents. Jeanne offered to get a reading from groups that do this lobbying to see where we stand in terms of pressure on the federal government. Elizabeth also asked that COAC and IFAPA be here next meeting to see if they are educating key people on the issue. Terry S. said there is a discussion about block granting federal funds to the state and there is a great chance that is going to happen.

Minutes of February 7 Meeting

Diane Dominguez made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 7, 2003 meeting as written. Terry Solomon seconded. The motion carried.

Committee Reports

***Bylaws, membership staggered terms**

Elizabeth said Council members would be drawing 1, 2, and 3 year terms today to randomly determine who gets which terms. The new terms will begin July 1st, 2003. She also said that the formal approved copy of the new bylaws is in the packet given to members today.

Debrief Foster Parent Conference; Need for Adoption Training

Ray said he would be participating in a conference call to address concerns from the recent IFAPA/DCFS Training Conference. The only concern mentioned during discussion was that there were a lot of people on the waiting list and the number allowed to attend was cut in half from previous years. Jim Jones suggested this discussion be set aside for now.

Focus Group on Federal Review

Joan Nelson Phillips, Yolanda Green – Foster Care Utilization Program with U of I, and Kathleen Clark from QA.

They distributed the following handouts:

Handout F – Slide show

Handout G – Brochure developed in partnership with private sector to prepare foster and adoptive parents for the review.

Yolanda said they are making these presentations across Illinois to raise awareness of the Child and Family Services Review. She gave a history of how the federal government came to the point of doing these reviews. Joan said that none of the 32 states that have been reviewed have passed yet.

Art suggested that foster parents and workers be trained together to raise the awareness on both ends.

Working Lunch (continue Focus Group)

Joan Nelson Phillips said they are gathering information through focus groups, to incorporate into a self-assessment. They conducted a focus group on the topics of Training and Foster & Adoptive Home Licensing/Approval/Recruitment.

If anyone has ideas for them to consider, their contact information is on the handout.

Report from Adoption Support Program

***Family Tree Connections**

Michael Courtwright gave a history of the program. They initially invited adoptive families in Vermilion County to meet and discuss their needs. Adoptive parents drafted a program plan for the RFP to receive family centered services money. In spring of 2002 the Family Tree Adoption Connections program was funded by DCFS.

See Handouts H & I for details on the programs they offer.

Director McDonald

Jess thanked the council for their attention to an increasingly larger population in the child welfare system. He said that post-adoption service is the fastest growing part of our budget and is tested by 400 kids a year. He said that there were approximately 429 disruptions in FY'02, and that many of those kids find their way to residential or high-end services. That is twice what it was in 1992 – 216, but represents only 1.29% of all 39,000 kids in care compared to 4-5,000 kids in care in 1992. He said that the federal block grant discussion is on the table again, with the significance being it questions whether post adoption is supported.

Director McDonald said that the Governor's budget presentation will be held next week. He does not expect to see any cuts in anything related to adoption. As in past years, a portion of adoption funds go into post adopt.

Jim Jones thanked Jess for establishing the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council.

Status Report on Respite Grant

Ray Gates said Joe Anna Sullivan's Division is taking the lead on the grant. This Council is the official advisory group. Joe Anna could not be here, however, so she asked Ray to relay the following information:

*They are still seeking approval to hire a Project Coordinator – the choice has been made but waiting for approval.

*Debra Kinsey attended the annual conference for grantees in Arlington, VA on 3/10-11.

*Debra, Kim Silver and Joe Anna had a conference call with the project monitor, Carol Thompson, to give her an update on progress. She seems good to work with and said that many other projects were slow in getting going. She is willing to consider most changes we'd like to make to the original proposal, but we should discuss with her first and get her approval and follow-up with written changes.

*The proposal for next year's funds and the 6-month progress report were both due by March 30th and were both submitted on time.

*Joe Anna said she will try to attend the IAAC's June 6 meeting and give an update.

Jeanne Howard said that the grant is set up to meet the needs of medically fragile children during this first phase, and the second phase is for children with emotional/behavioral needs. The capacity is 30 per year and all participating families have been identified. She said this is a very limited research and development grant. They determined

eligibility based on the knowledge they have on needs of children in the database.
Clinical staff assisted in the process.

Memo to Blue Ribbon Task Force

Elizabeth said she and Jim Jones requested a meeting with the Blue Ribbon Task Force but they did not receive a response.

Diane Dominguez made a motion that a letter be sent to Louanner Peters and an invitation to the next meeting. Terry Solomon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Members discussed what to put in the letter and the following items were mentioned:

Respite is a badly needed service for adoptive parents

Subsidies need to be protected

Post adoption support of services must continue

There are approximately 40,000 kids in adoption/guardianship arena and 19,000 in foster care arena.

FP's will be reluctant to adopt if they don't think they have support from the state.

Elizabeth said she would develop the letter.

Agenda/Location for Next Meeting, 06/06/03

The next meeting will be held from 10-3 on June 6, 2003 at a location to be determined in Bloomington.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

Appropriate training - Art & Jim will lead

Statistical reports from June Dorn

Status Report on Respite Grant

2 Adoption Support Program Presentations

FY'04 Meeting Schedule

Other Topics

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by motion at 2:45 p.m.

cc: DCFS Director June Dorn
Mary Sue Morsch Ray Gates
Debbie McCarrel
Diane DeLeonardo