

**STATEWIDE FOSTER CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**January 30, 2004**  
**160 N LaSalle, Chicago, IL**  
**Approved as Amended**

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>DCFS Staff</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Blakely, Donsetta Boyd, Gladys Chasteen, Ray Cooper, Pat Darville, Heidi Davis, Claudia Edwards, Faye Jajko, Ruth Kazaras, Ellen Lane, James Miller, Andrea Senz, Uli Stone, Linda Welenc, Adrienne White, Mary Wilson, Geraldine	Baker, Sarah Jones, James Kline, Vicky Simon, Johnnie Thurman-Green, Jerri	Amato, Carla Ball, Mercedes Baron-Jeffrey, Angela Becerra, Joseph Bishop, Arthur Byrd, Michael Burgos, Mayra Cain, Donna Candelas, Jose Earlie, Flora Eyer, Gwenn Garrett, Lorne Gates, Ray Graham, Chyrel Hyde, Marilyn Kennedy, Deb Maher, Jean Manuel, Jill McGlothlin, Terry McGrath, Chris Nelson-Phillips, Joan O'Brien, Jennifer Petrick, Lynda Peyton, Bill Thompson, Clyde Thompson, Nancy Weck, Terry West, David Williams, Velma	Cooper, Christopher Florey, Sylvia James, Vanessa Singer, Judy Spires, Denise Thomas, Nillie Welenc, Jerry

**WELCOME**

Adrienne Welenc welcomed members of the Council and visitors from Cook Central, the guest region. James Lane also welcomed a new member to the Council, Ruth Jajko.

**SPECIAL ORDERS**

James Lane said there were no special orders for this meeting. James also spoke about his monthly report to the Director. He said the purpose of the Report is to let the Director know the status of Implementation Plan scoring. He read his current report which contains concerns about ensuring that foster parents would be able to communicate with the Director with ease even

though extra layers of staff appear to have been added throughout the Department. Jim said he wanted to emphasize that foster parents should be able to effectively contact the Director about their problems and ideas concerning serving the children in care with the Department.

Jim also spoke about Foster Parent Appreciation Month in his letter to the Director. He emphasized that the purpose of Foster Parent Appreciation Month is to recognize the value of foster parents. Jim asked the Director to provide outstanding attention to foster parents to ensure that children in care with the Department of Children and Family Services receive the services they need. Jim stated that the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council is committed to the goals and visions of the Department and the child welfare system in Illinois. James Lane also asked that Director Bryan Samuels remains committed to the work that the Council provides to children in care.

Ray Gates suggested that Jim add a paragraph to the report that would state:

*In addition to scoring the Implementation Plans, members of the Policy Committee are working diligently to roll-out the Foster Parent Law Implementation Review Protocol.* Ray said the Policy Committee developed training for the AP teams, and they trained the three Cook County AP teams two weeks ago. Ray said that Council plans are to train the downstate teams in February. After that the committee will confer with Deputies Williams, McEwen and Bishop regarding the roll-out. Finally the Council will prepare a letter to the POS foster care agency directors to advise them of the upcoming rollout of the review protocol planned for April 1, 2004.

#### **FOLLOW-UP CHECK ON LOCAL SCHOOL'S RECORDS MANAGEMENT – Ray Chasteen**

Council members talked about difficulties and concerns they had in visiting schools to check on records' management. Ray Gates suggested that we talk with Angela Baron-Jeffrey, who works with Sharon Freagon, to get her ideas on how Council members could more effectively talk with school representatives on the issue of school policy and procedures. He said Angela would be present later in the meeting. Ray Gates also stated that Educational Advisors might provide help because they have relationships with schools throughout Illinois.

Andrea Miller reported on her efforts to work with a middle school and high school in the Champaign area. She said both schools were able to identify the Records Custodian and both schools were very conscientious about the issue of maintaining confidentiality of student records, including maintenance of Release of Information documentation. Other members reported that schools refused to discuss this with them.

Nancy Thompson will set up a conference call with specified members of the Council. The purpose of the call will be to prepare a final written report on the Council's progress on the issue of school awareness regarding policy and confidentiality of student records. Members on the call will be: Ray Chasteen, Andrea Miller, Ruth Jajko, Claudia Davis, Mary White, Linda Stone and Pat Cooper. Angela Baron Jeffrey will also be a part of the conference call to insure proper management of student records. Angela's email is abaronjeff@niu.edu; phone 815-753-0993. Ray Gates suggested that the Council also consult Sharon Freagon and Linda Williams for developing the plan with the Illinois State Board of Education.

## **MINUTES FROM 11/21/03 MEETING**

*Andrea Miller made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Ellen Kazaras seconded the motion. All members were in favor, and the minutes were accepted as written.*

## **FINAL REPORTS TO DIRECTOR**

James Lane said there were no final reports to the Director.

## **PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW PILOTS –**

Uli Senz reported that work is done on piloting the protocol with Cook North, New Life, CHASI, Family Service Center and the Baby Fold. The committee included Jerry Welenc, Heidi Darville, Uli Senz, Elizabeth Richmond and Joyce Loy. The committee received assistance from Michael Byrd and Ray Gates.

Uli said two people were sent to each agency to conduct interviews. Foster parent interviews were also conducted by phone. Uli said work was done on the content of letters to be sent to agencies to report how well they performed. These letters draw conclusions on the information that was received from the pilots.

Ray Gates talked about the positive results conveyed during training of the Cook County AP teams. Ray said next steps would be to train remaining regional AP teams and to develop a letter to be sent to Regional Administrators and all POS foster care agency Executive Directors, apprising them of the process and letting them know of the rollout April 1, 2004. Ray said Deputy Directors Arthur Bishop and Erwin McEwen would review the letter to ensure they are in agreement with the contents before rollout of the plan. Ray also said SWFCAC members would be trained at the February Council meeting.

Ray Gates presented the agency feedback letters to James Lane for his signature. He said a copy of the data from the interview was included with the letter, which could be used as a tool to improve the development of agency Foster Parent Implementation Plans. Ray also discussed the tally sheet from the interviews with randomly-selected foster parents on how they agree with questions about foster plan law issues related to the agency.

Ellen Kazaras suggested that the AP team contact person be copied on the letters to improve effectiveness of working with the agency. *Mary White made a motion to include the AP team contact person on the letters. Uli Senz seconded the motion. All Council members were in favor, and the motion passed.*

Uli Senz asked that the letters go back to the Committee for final review before James Lane signs them.

## **REVIEW AND UPDATE TASK CHART**

The Task Chart was discussed in detail by Council members. The Task Chart will be updated by Ray Gates and Nancy Thompson. Ray Gates suggested that the Council make future changes to the chart by motion to reflect the will of the Council.

### **FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH – JILL MANUEL**

Jill said planning has begun for May, Foster Parent Appreciation Month. She said a series of events were being planned, and that one day in May would be set aside where communities can all mark this event at the same time. She plans a month that will show appreciation for foster parents, a grassroots event throughout Illinois. Jill asked the SWFCAC for ideas to boost this event. She said there would also be an essay contest for foster kids to write about their foster parents in an effort to include the voices of children in care with the celebration of Foster Parent Appreciation Month.

### **INTRODUCE NEW DIVISION MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURE – Velma Williams**

Velma said she would be working with the Office of Communications on Foster Parent Appreciation Month and that she is looking forward to new and creative ideas for the event. She updated the Council on new administrative staff in the Office of Foster Parent Support Services and introduced Carla Amato as the new Administrator. Velma noted the need for additional staff in the Office of Foster Parent Support and discussed possibilities for enhancing its staffing level. In the Division of Clinical Practice and Professional Development, Velma announced two new Associate Deputies: Gayle Hansen and Dr. Mark Holzberg. She said both Gayle and Mark will work hard to identify and understand the needs of Illinois foster parents and children in care.

Velma also spoke about the new initiative, Integrated Assessment. She said it is her job to make sure we have personnel on board and have the resources available to support this new program. Velma said that training has begun for POS staff, that orientations have been provided for foster families, and that key agencies have been looked at for training of foster families for this program.

### **INTRODUCE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS – Arthur Bishop (phone: 312-793-6391)**

Arthur Bishop, Deputy Director for Operations, introduced the Regional Administrators. He spoke of the Administrators as part of the Child Welfare Team who understand about permanency and the well-being and safety of youth and children in care. Each Regional Administrator introduced him or her self. They are Bill Peyton, Southern Region; Debra Kennedy, Central Region; Joe Becerra, Northern Region; Lorne Garrett, Cook South; Marilyn Hyde, Cook Central and Chris McGrath, Cook North.

Mr. Bishop and the Regional Administrators emphasized that they will focus on good communication with the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council, the Youth Advisory Boards, as well as all Illinois Foster Parents. Mr. Bishop emphasized a collaborative approach in developing relationships with all aspects of the child welfare system. He also introduced Larry Chasey, Associate Deputy Director Downstate, and Jose Candelas, Associate Deputy Director Cook County.

### **OVERVIEW OF INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT – Jennifer O'Brien**

(email: [JOBrien1@idcfs.state.il.us](mailto:JOBrien1@idcfs.state.il.us))

Jennifer introduced herself as the Cook Coordinator for the Integrated Assessment Program. She also introduced Brenda Owens as her downstate counterpart. Jennifer distributed two detailed brochures: Integrated Assessment: Program Overview and Integrated Assessment: Questions and Answers for Caregivers. She explained the details of the process of collecting important

family information after a child enters the Department's care. Jennifer stressed that by providing clinically-based integrated assessments early in the Department's care of the child, the caregivers, birth parents, and caseworkers will all be better informed and prepared to meet the demands of caring for the child's developmental, health, social, physical and emotional needs. Jennifer said Vince Champaign is also a contact with regard to this new program. His phone number is 312-814-5516.

#### **NEW ADOPTION FORMS - Mary Jane Schmoll**

Mary Jane spoke to the Council about proposed policy changes to the new Adoption Forms. She alleged that input from foster and adoptive parents was not sought before these forms were sent for printing and implementation. Mary Jane talked about problems with the forms that she felt would take away foster parent rights. After discussion by the Council, *Pat Cooper made a motion that we request to the Department that the two forms, 1) Adoption Assistance Subsidized Guardianship Eligibility Application and Agreement and 2) Adoption Assistance Eligibility for Children not under the Legal Responsibility of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, be put on hold until foster and adoptive parent groups and advisory councils could review them and make suggestions. Linda Stone seconded the motion. All members were in favor, and the motion passed.* Ray Gates later said that Susan Netznik would email the new forms for Adoption Subsidy to members of the Council, the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council, and other groups to provide folks with a review and comment period. Susan said there would then be discussion about the forms and revisions would be made, if necessary.

#### **YOUTH COUNCIL'S WORK ON SIBLING RIGHTS – Michael Byrd**

(email: [Mbyrd@idcfs.state.il.us](mailto:Mbyrd@idcfs.state.il.us); phone 312-328-2098)

Michael introduced Zakiya Kidd, Cook Central President of the Regional Youth Advisory Board, who spoke about the Sibling Rights Resolution being sponsored by the Statewide Youth Advisory Board. Zakiya said this Resolution was on the way to Senate at the end of February and that the Youth Board was seeking feedback and support from the SWFCAC. Zakiya stressed the importance of children having the right to maintain ties with their siblings.

Members of the SWFCAC made comments and suggestions. Pat Cooper said that licensing laws circumvent kids from being placed together and that overrides to this do not happen very often.

Mary White said it was important that siblings do have contact with one another, but she questioned who should make the decision when certain cases may not be appropriate or in the best interest of the children.

Claudia Davis was concerned that adoptive parents could not make a decision whether their adoptive child should continue to maintain a relationship with their siblings when it is not in the best interest of the child.

Because the SWFCAC intends to be a pre-adoptive source for siblings, Andrea Miller asked that the SWFCAC be considered to assist and provide feedback to the Task Force. Andrea did not ask that the resolution be amended, but suggested that the SWFCAC could be supportive, perhaps in the form of a committee on the Joint Task Force.

Andrea also asked if it would be possible to investigate Policy and Procedure to address some of these issues to see if there are vehicles or mechanisms to afford siblings to be a part of the adoptive process through the Department.

Michael Byrd said he would also ask for support from the Statewide Adoption Council at their next meeting.

The Council asked Michael for clarification of the "Adoption Registry Advisory Council".

Michael Byrd said that through the process of joint meetings and symposiums, solutions to many of the concerns that the SWFCAC have are addressed through legislation, policies, and programs that already exist. He stated that the purpose of the Task Force would be to consider the concerns that SWFCAC members have in regard to the Joint Resolution and the sibling rights' issue.

The Council discussed the dynamics of this document and the establishment of a Task Force as it relates to adoptive parents.

*Andrea Miller made a motion that the Council should make a recommendation to seek an outlet for this endeavor and to be part of the development of this effort -- a committee of representatives from SWFCAC, the Youth Advisory Council and the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council. Adrienne Welenc seconded the motion. Pat Cooper and Mary White abstained. All other members were in favor of the motion.*

A committee was formed to work on this effort; members included Andrea Miller as chair, Uli Senz, Fay Edwards, Linda Stone, and Ruth Jajko.

#### **COA REQUIREMENT FOR FOSTER PARENT CPR TRAINING – Joan Phillips**

Joan came to the meeting to seek questions and/or support for the issue of CPR training. Council members discussed the need for CPR training, the expenses involved and the liability issues that might arise from training. They questioned that if it were mandatory education, why wasn't it a part of licensing? James Lane felt CPR training was necessary, but he said that we need to know how we can structure the training process. Ray Gates said that if the Department does begin an effort to plan how training might be done, it would be great if members of the SWFCAC could be involved in the planning process. Joan said they would be included.

#### **FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL**

James Lane spoke about future leadership issues involving the Council and the transition of leadership in May to a new Chair. He proposed a leadership summit for the Council to include past Chairs, people who have run for leadership, and people who might be interested in leadership in May. The purpose of the summit would be to address the goals and mission of the Council. Ray Gates suggested that we have the summit February 26 at 7:00 PM, the evening before our next meeting in Bloomington. It was agreed.

#### **AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Uli Senz suggested that the issues of criminal bars be on the agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Mary White made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Gladys Boyd seconded the motion. All members were in favor with the motion.*