

STATEWIDE FOSTER CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
March 25, 2004
Rosemont, Illinois
Minutes – Approved as Corrected April 30, 2004

Members Present	Members Absent	DCFS Staff
Baker, Sarah	Chasteen, Ray	Amato, Carla
Blakely, Donsetta	Edwards, Faye	Byrd, Michael
Boyd, Gladys	Florey, Sylvia	DeLeonardo, Diane
Cooper, Pat	Jones, James	Gates, Ray
Darville, Heidi	Simon, Johnnie	Hansen, Gayle
Davis, Claudia	Thurman-Green, Jerri	Petri, Harley
Jajko, Ruth		James, Vanessa
Kazaras, Ellen		Thompson, Nancy
Kline, Vicky		
Lane, James		
Miller, Andrea		
Senz, Uli		
Stone, Linda		
Welenc, Adrienne		
White, Mary		
Wilson, Geraldine		

WELCOME

James Lane and Adrienne Welenc welcomed members of the Council.

REPORT ON NUMBER OF SCHOOL RECORDS SENT AND RETURNED – HARLEY PETRI

Harley Petri from the State Central Register, Child Abuse Hotline in Springfield, reported on child abuse records sent to public schools, a requirement of Public Act 92-0295. Harley clarified that this Act mandates that physical and sexual abuse reports be sent to a child's school within 10 days after completion of an investigation of alleged physical or sexual abuse. Under this Act, if a report is indicated, the Protective Service Unit shall send a copy of the final finding report to the school of the child who is the indicated victim. Harley spoke about how investigators are utilizing the SACWIS computer system to enter data from these reports to determine if a child has been deemed safe or not. Mr. Petri reviewed how his staff prepares the information that is sent to school principals (via certified mail). He said the letter includes the investigator's name, the report and finding dates, data on the alleged victim, data on the alleged perpetrator and relationship to the victim, the allegations, disposition, and retention period for the report. A letter is also sent to the custodial or non-custodial parents of the child notifying them that the school has been made aware of this information. Harley said the letters stress that the information on the child is to be kept confidential. If the indicated finding is overturned in an appeal or if the Protective Service Unit deems that a child is no longer at risk, Harley said the State Central Register requests that records be returned.

Mr. Petri said 592 abuse notifications were sent to public schools from last March to the present, and that 7.3% went to the Springfield sub-region. He said that a breakdown on the reports

showed that reports have gone out to every region in Illinois. He also said for FY2003, there were 659 school notifications. Harley gave a rough estimate for FY2003 that 20 – 21% of all calls to the hotline resulted in new reports of suspected abuse or neglect (60,985 new reports). 35% (21,345) of those reports were indicated. Letters of notification were sent to schools on 3.1% of last year's indicated reports. Harley discussed the process of how reports are returned for three reasons: expiration of time; the child is deemed safe; or the indication has been overturned. He also discussed training efforts that were provided to schools on how to process these reports.

Three Unrelated Children Policy

Mr. Petri also talked about the new placement procedure regarding three unrelated children in a home. He clarified that a foster home could have more than three children based on sibling relationships. Harley said a one-month analysis revealed that out of 124 placement denials, only three were denied because of the new rule.

REPORT FROM CRIMINAL BARS COMMITTEE – ULI SENZ

Uli said the SWFCAC Committee was developed out the IL Adoption Advisory Council's (IAAC) concern around criminal bars that prevent licensure or might be an obstacle to resource development for adoptive homes. He said the Committee had talked with Randy Wells, Christina Schneider, and Matt Franklin about the legal aspect of this issue. Uli said that they were looking at ways to re-word the waiver conditions that currently prevent some people from being given a license. Mr. Senz said there would be another Committee conference call April 20. Uli Senz and Krista McCoy from the IAAC co-chair this Committee.

SPRING CONFERENCE OPEN FORUM TOPICS

The Council identified possible topics to discuss at the Open Forum:

- Sharing of task sheets and activities of both the SWFCAC and the IAAC.
- Open discussion from caregivers about concerns they would like both Councils to address.
- The reunification issue in terms of permanencies and the role of foster parents in this process.

Diane DeLeonardo will randomly pass out sheets at the Conference registration table where foster/adoptive parents could pose questions for Director Samuels to address during his opening keynote.

MINUTES FROM THE 2-27-04 MEETING

Adrienne Welenc made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Pat Cooper seconded the motion. All Council members were in agreement, and the motion to accept the minutes was passed.

PLANNING FOR MAY 21 MEETING IN CARBONDALE

The Council decided to meet at the Giant City State Park Lodge for this meeting. Nancy Thompson will check on train schedules for those members who do not drive.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Sibling Rights’ Committee – Michael Byrd

Michael Byrd reported on the Youth Advisory Council meeting held 3-13-04. Andrea Miller and Linda Stone from the SWFCAC Sibling Rights’ Committee attended. He said youth members welcomed the ideas and concerns that were presented to them. Heidi Darville suggested that our agenda include time for the Youth Advisory Council so we could correlate programs and issues that relate to independent living, youth employment, and problems DCFS youth face.

Andrea Miller suggested the SWFCAC and the Youth Advisory Council pool together (create a sub-committee) which would reflect and feed into the larger joint task force that is being built. In this manner, she said we could begin working and discussing issues before the actual formation of the joint task force. Andrea asked the Council for three members for this sub-committee. Andrea Miller and Gladys Boyd volunteered to be a part of the sub-committee.

Uli Senz spoke about our relationship with the Child Welfare Advisory Council (CWAC). He made a motion that because there are cross-assignments between our groups, our agenda should include a regular report about CWAC issues. Uli also motioned that we offer the Adoption Advisory Council and the Youth Advisory Council an opportunity to share their agendas with the SWFCAC. Donsetta Blakely seconded the motion. All members were in favor, and the motion passed.

Nomination Committee – Vicky Kline

Vicky Kline passed out a revised Officers’ Annual Nomination Ballot for the SWFCAC. She clarified the process of how nominations should be submitted. Andrea Miller withdrew her name from nomination as Chair.

IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW ROLL-OUT

RANDOM DRAW OF REGIONS AND AGENCIES (BY REGION) TO BE REVIEWED – CARLA AMATO

After discussion, Ray Gates proposed we divide the regions into two groups, Downstate and Cook County (leaving out Cook North which was reviewed during the pilot). Council members drew two agencies to be reviewed this year: Downstate Southern Region and Cook South Region will be reviewed. Agencies were randomly selected from each region, and members volunteered to be the lead and/or partner.

DCFS Region	Lead	Partner
Downstate Southern Region	Andrea Miller	
Cook South		

Council members signed up to review 23 agencies:

Agency Name	Region	Lead	Partner
Beatrice Caffrey	Cook North	Heidi Darville	
Cabrini Green	Cook South	Heidi Darville	
Catholic Charities of Chicago	Cook Central	Donsetta Blakely	Gladys Boyd
Catholic Charities of Joliet DuPage	Northern		

Agency Name	Region	Lead	Partner
Catholic Charities of Peoria	Downstate Central	Linda Stone	
Chicago Association f/Retarded Citizens	Cook South		
Chicago Youth Centers	Cook South		
ChildServ	Cook South	Geraldine Wilson	
Circle Family Care	Cook Central	Glays Boyd	Geraldine Wilson
Cunningham	Central	Mary White	Sarah Baker
Evangelical Child and Family	Cook Central		
Family Counseling Center	Southern	Vicky Kline	Claudia Davis
Generations of Hope	Central	Ellen Kazaras	Claudia Davis
Jewish Children's Bureau	Cook North		
Life Link/Bensenville	Cook Central	Uli Senz	
Little City	Cook North		
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois	Cook South		
Our Children's Homestead	Northern		
Salem	Downstate Central	Andrea Miller	Mary White
Shelter Inc	Cook North	Ruth Jajko	
Sequin Services	Cook Central	Adrienne Welenc	Donsetta Blakely
Youth Campus	Cook North	Pat Cooper	Adrienne Welenc
Youth Outreach Services	Cook Central	Uli Senz	Pat Cooper

PHASE 2 OF IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

TRAINING FOR MEMBERS – ULI SENZ AND HEIDI DARVILLE

Uli Senz reviewed the manual for members conducting implementation reviews for POS agency and DCFS region reviews. He reviewed the script of what to say to begin the interview with each interviewee and discussed the interview questions for liaison, case manager, licensing worker, and supervisor of case manager. Uli also focused on the implementation review evaluation criteria for each interviewee, a guide and aid in the scoring process of how well each question is answered. He also spoke about the script and foster parent questionnaire for foster parent telephone interviews. Then Uli discussed the feedback letters to agencies and regions that determine at what level they scored: acceptable, somewhat acceptable, or not acceptable. He described the assessment of interview responses form and the final result/monitors' explicit comments, suggestions and advice form. Ruth Jajko, Andrea Miller and Sarah Baker did a fine job of role-playing the interview process. Council members discussed ways to conduct professional interviews and to use the tools successfully.

REVIEW AND UPDATE TASK CHART

Task #7 – Host homes for youth home from college -Updated by Carla Amato

Carla stated that on March 10, the committee discussed ways to identify contacts at colleges and universities to find host homes for youth. She said Terry McGlothlin has developed a list of kids who responded to the survey and the schools they attend. The committee will focus on the schools that most kids attend: University of Illinois, Chicago City College, and Northern Illinois University. Carla said they will develop application forms and materials to determine how families will be selected. She said a determination would be made about the need for family background checks. Carla will work with Diane DeLeonardo, who is investigating the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. They will look at those application and orientation materials to

see how they might work for the host family program. Carla said the target date to get this program running is September. She said the next meeting is April 7. Carla will discuss SWFCAC member's concerns regarding this program at that meeting.

Ellen Kazaras made a motion to update Task #7. She would like clarification from licensing as to the impact of taking ex-wards or current wards into currently licensed foster homes. Pat Cooper seconded the motion. All members were in agreement, and the motion passed.

The status of **Task #15/16** regarding statistical summary of child abuse and neglect letters/notices that are sent to schools was changed from Ongoing to Task Accomplished.

Task #14 regarding members having a contract with DCFS will be updated to state that this is a recurring task (every July 1st.)

Task #5 – Ray Gates will follow up on finalizing the revised implementation review process. Donsetta Blakely suggested that the wording in the amendment to the by-laws be changed: “Before any council member in good standing can conduct interviews they have to attend training.”

Task #17 – Vicky Kline reported that DCFS announced two-day pilot foster parent training in Rockford on April 19/20 and at Cook South on April 26/27. Gayle Hansen stated that training on children with sexual and behavior problems would include foster parents, child welfare workers, DCP, resource people, APT and/or clinical staff.

CHANGE IN STAFFER FOR STATEWIDE – CARLA AMATO

Carla Amato said she will take the lead for the SWFCAC when Ray Gates leaves our Office. Michael Byrd said that External Affairs has hired a new staff member who will co-coordinate SWFCAC and AAC work with him. He said the new staff member will support the Chief of African American Services.

NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT EDUCATION CONFERENCE – CARLA AMATO

Carla said she received approval from the Director to send Council members to the Conference in May. Carla cautioned everyone, however, that even though the Director has approved sending caregivers to the Conference, approvals beyond DCFS still need to be given. She said there would be three members from SWFCAC besides Jim Lane, Chair, who could attend May 11 – 15 in Orlando, FL. Claudia Davis, Vicky Kline and Donsetta Blakely were chosen to attend. Two alternates were chosen: Ellen Kazaras and Gladys Boyd. Andrea Miller was identified as an alternate if needed. Carla will seek three members from the IAAC to attend.

ADJOURN

Donsetta Blakely made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 PM. Claudia Davis seconded the motion. All members were in favor, and the motion passed.

Members adjourned to the ballroom to help set-up the Caregivers' Conference.