

**Joint Meeting of the
Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Wyndham Springfield City Centre, 700 East Adams, Springfield, Illinois
November 8, 2019
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

IAAC MEMBERS PRESENT	SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT	GUESTS	STAFF
Kathleen Bush	Gladys Boyd	Lamont Boswell	Janet Wukas Ahern
Keeley Giles	Kimberly Coniglio	Julie Cebulski	Julie Barbosa
Beth Hunter	Arrelda Hall	Christine Feldman	Geneva Byrd
Natalie Miller	Rachel Hoyt	Debbie Freke	Rae Colyer
Maripat Oliver	Harriet Kersh	Katie Friend	Jason Cummins
Elizabeth Richmond	Maya Maclin	Autymne Huerta	Barbara Crandall
Cara Siebert	Karolyn Needles-Hobbs	Vanessa James	Debra Dyer-Webster
Karen Taylor	Kellye Norris	Jeanna Radford	Carlene Erno
Danny Tolliver, Jr.	Mary Savage	Mark Tesreau	Gwenn Eyer
Amy Trotter	Carol Sheley	Pam Winsel	Jen Florent
Karen Wardlaw	Samella Taylor-Lewis		Sylvia Fonseca
Mark Werner	Stephanie Tesreau		Leonika "Nika" Garrett
Jeremy Wheeler			Michelle Grove
Julie Yelverton			Cynthia Richter-Jackson
IAAC MEMBERS ABSENT	SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT		Kelly King
Crystal Rekart	Katy Cotts		Marc Smith
Danielle Sanders	Ken Keefe		Susan Wilkins
Brittney Sprouse	Susan McConnell		Arlena Roach
Linda White	Kate Monte		

Welcome and Introductions

Carol Sheley

SWFCAC Chairperson Carol Sheley welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:14 a.m. and council members and guests introduced themselves.

Child Welfare in Illinois

Marc D. Smith, Acting Director

Director Smith reminded the councils that he had attended a SWFCAC meeting a year ago when his agency received one of the council's Foster Parent Law awards. He acknowledged the value of the work of the councils. He stated that as he has started in his new role it is important for him to be a leader in many areas, identifying priorities and setting goals. This is one of the biggest child welfare organizations in the world and we need to identify our roles and goals and lead the way. He said that it is his job to focus the media, legislature, etc. on what really meets the needs

of children and families. He said that sometimes public perception is that the work is just common sense, but in fact we need to focus on working with families at their worst to help them to be able to achieve their best. He said that we need to protect and nurture children and help build families in situations where parents were not necessarily protected and nurtured in the past. He was asked to formally present his vision, and after some research he determined that he didn't need a fancy 20-word statement. His vision statement is, "Safety is our business." He noted that it is not simplistic, it is direct. Everything we do from the inception of the case, to foster care, to case management, to IT, our work is focused on safety. They conduct Safety Enhancement training for all DCFS and POS workers and supervisors.

Resource development is critical. He said that as he goes around to offices to touch base with staff. He said that he has been welcomed warmly, with the assurance that people are backing him and praying for him. He has asked what they need and they state that they need more foster parents. They indicate that they need to focus on building out what our support needs are and developing resources. Kids are still staying in offices overnight. They identify the issue, and develop strategies to address it. We need to work on building more resources. Under the leadership of Debra Dyer-Webster, they are working on it. They need more shelter beds. Director Smith acknowledged that the state cannot just cycle from cutting resources then asking for resources and going back and forth. They need more staff. They have case managers and investigators that have too much work. He talked to the legislators when he got to the Department, noting that they appreciate the 75 new staff, but they need more. He said that a miraculous thing happened. They heard him and responded. We have a governor who supports our business. He said that one of the reasons Director Smith got the job is because he is absolutely not political. He stated that no one knew who he was on March 30. Only those who worked with him in his agency knew him. He was not the president or CFO of the agency; he was the director of operations. The governor demonstrates amazing support for the Department. Director Smith noted that politicians often step to the side when working with the Department, but the governor has stepped up.

When Director Smith first came to the agency he immediately had to answer questions about a child death. While he was answering questions, the governor stepped up and started answering questions alongside him. When interviewing he was asked by the governor to categorize the 200 most vulnerable children and make a plan to meet their needs. His answer was when you think about saving those 200 you must focus on all 17,000 kids. You must work on strategies for intact families and build resources. You must build supports in all those areas.

When Director Smith had been here six months he was asked what he had accomplished. They wanted serious numbers, i.e., how did you spend the new allotted money you'd been given? The Department had hired 200 more staff. We have access to 32 more shelter beds and approximately 30 additional residential beds. We cannot see these from the outside, but we have reduced our beyond medical necessity numbers; by the data, the length of stay is shorter, but that is not enough. They are pushing for more beds with more coming in six, 12 and 15 months. They sent letters to each agency CEO to request one bed now. The agencies see that as an opportunity to partner with the Department and this is a step in building touch.

The primary way we build our resources is the primary way we support children who come into care. They developed a foster care recruitment plan. It is no longer acceptable for DCFS workers to go into the private sector to demand more homes. The private sector is trying, and the Department developed a recruitment plan, put it into practice, and it didn't work. They are no longer willing to accept something that doesn't work. They went back to the table and refined the plan and will continue to do so. Communications stepped up, people that had ideas that they were not necessarily willing to express initially, stepped up. The private sector helped them to write a new plan that will roll out in six months. Having more people around the table is critical.

Director said that the reason he was with the councils is that he wants them to understand his passion and commitment to children. There are times when the work is not done. We own that. We will learn from tragedy and shortcomings, holding people accountable. His first legislative hearing was spent listening to the lecture, taking the good and the bad. They said that when a worker makes a mistake you must hold the worker accountable. They said that if he did a good job he would be allowed to stay. If not, he would be out. They are going to hold everyone accountable. Director Smith is working to hold people accountable and empower them to do their jobs. If we do something that does not work, we need to take the time to do it better. He is asking for staff to provide their A-game. If they're not appropriate for/committed to certain work, they need to move to work that is a better fit. Every day we think about the work a little bit better. Every day we have one more employee. Every two days we have another bed. Every two days we have another emergency foster home. Every two days we have a child who goes into a foster home or is adopted. Every day a child safely goes home. Every day a worker thinks about safety a little differently that they did the day before. Director Smith acknowledged that he must build on the work of those who came before him, knowing that foster and adoptive parents that care about children and work so hard are the foundation. He knows what it is like to work in the private sector. He recognizes that both public and private sector staff require the same training and support.

Director Smith thanked the councils for inviting him and for caring for "our kids." He acknowledged that there are thousands who put it on the line every day, caring for kids that need us. He said that it is his honor and pleasure to serve children and families in Illinois. He noted that in speaking to legislators, the lead justice in the Supreme Court, judges throughout the state he recognized that all recognize the importance of the work. He acknowledged the councils and said that all should be committed to doing our best work.

QIC Award Presentation

Cynthia Richter-Jackson

Cynthia began her presentation with a brief overview of the QIC-Ag grant. The Children's Bureau Administration for Children and Families established the national Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardian Support and Preservation. The QIC team is made up of Spaulding for Children in partnership with the University of Texas, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and University of Wisconsin. This group was designed to promote permanence when reunification is no longer a goal, and improve adoption and guardianship preservation and support.

Five years ago, Illinois applied for and was accepted as one of eight states and tribes participating in the grant. The project was designed to test promising evidence-based

interventions and practices. Long-term outcomes were to increase post-permanency stability, improve behavioral health for children and improving child well-being. Illinois was allowed to choose what they wanted to work on, in collaboration with private agencies, the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council, etc. Illinois chose to focus on post-adoptive youth between the ages of eleven and sixteen to offer interventions to the youth and their families. The intervention offered is called TARGET, Trauma Affect Regulation Guide for Evaluation and Therapy. It is a strength-based psycho-educational intervention for children affected by trauma. Partnering agencies included Metropolitan Family Services and Baby Fold. Outcomes with demonstrated success now have influence on current practice.

Cynthia acknowledged Christine Feldman and her contributions to the work. Cynthia presented the QIC award to Director Smith, noting that Illinois continues to care about children after adoption. The Director thanked the Adoption Advisory Council for their work that led to the award. He noted that he has received awards during his time as Director, indicating that they are based on the strong work of others within the Department. Christine noted that The Children's Bureau loves Illinois. She said that Illinois has the best adoption system, nationally known,

Service Award Presentation

Mark Werner

Mark recognized Christine Feldman as this year's Adoption Month honoree. Christine was honored for many years of service to adoptive families and adoption professionals. Christine has spent the last five years leading the council in their work on the QIC-AG grant.

This grant has accomplished the development of the following:

- TARGET curriculum, an evidence-based curriculum that has assisted many families
- New Path Beyond Adoption website
- Post-Adoption Hotline
- Numerous training videos that will help sustain our work with supporting families

Prior to her work on the grant, Christine worked for DCFS in the statewide post-adoption unit. Mark noted that her work has helped children and families by providing additional resources, interventions, policy and practice and enhancing training that will help our adoptive parents and professionals in Illinois and through the United States.

Adoption Month Celebration

Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth acknowledged Karen Wardlaw's work on the Adoption Month celebration, noting that she was able to obtain outside funding for this year's celebration. This year's theme acknowledges various ways people are connected to adoption. She asked attendees to list their connections to adoption for the paper chains and distributed bracelets. She has extras for people who want to take them to their offices, support groups, etc. Jen Florent stated that the Department will post pictures that are shared, and suggested the hash tags to be used. She noted that this promotion has been picked up by media around the state.

Managed Care Organization

Debra Dyer-Webster

Debra stated that she is so excited to be here today to talk about Managed care, a step in assisting caregivers in obtaining healthcare services for children. Managed Care is an agreement between Healthcare and Family Services and IlliniCare to do all the medical and behavioral health services case management for youth in DCFS care who formerly had the medical card. All the services covered under the medical card will still be covered under IlliniCare, plus additional

services that are approved through IlliniCare. The managed care portion for youth in care and adopted children is called YouthCare and it will roll out officially on February 1, 2020. The soft roll-out began November 1st, with case managers contacting caseworkers, foster parents, etc. to gather information and let them know who they can talk to at IlliniCare. They really need caregivers to provide additional resources, i.e. providers youth already have a relationship with. Doctors do not have to join the complete network and may elect to serve only one youth, if necessary. Current providers are listed on the IlliniCare website. There is a FAQ section on the DCFS, HFS and IlliniCare web sites. IlliniCare provides medical case managers, allowing caseworkers to focus on other areas.

Children who come into IlliniCare will be put into different groups determining the level of support that the medical case managers provide. Some children require more attention than others. YouthCare case managers will have a lower case load, enabling them to assist in coordination of services. Ongoing assessments will be conducted and children may change care coordination from time to time. There has been a delay in the roll-out for adopted children and someone reported that a phone number that was shared in a previous meeting is not currently operable. Correct information is listed below.

Elizabeth stated that IAAC will set a time for a conference call in this regard. Pam Winsel from HFS said that for former youth in care, providers will receive a letter providing the links they need to make decisions and obtain care. Rachel Hoyt pointed out that there will be a 180-day period after the roll-out when providers will continue to be covered, even if they do not sign on with IlliniCare. Lamont Boswell stated that work is being done with providers added daily. They may not hit the database online right away, because there are several steps in adding providers to the system.

This coverage will not replace Healthworks. Healthworks has contract with IlliniCare to continue to provide services for the first 180 days. Anika Todd and Debra Dyer-Webster will follow up on additional questions not covered in the lists. To ask IlliniCare YouthCare questions, call 844-289-2264. Caregivers may email provider names, etc. to: ILYouthCare@illinicare.com. Kelly King noted the importance of knowing the correct name used by providers in the IlliniCare system. Children who are medically fragile and technology-dependent will not move to IlliniCare at this time. Children covered under Interstate Compact will not transition to IlliniCare. Pam Winsel stated that when adoptive parents carry comprehensive insurance and choose to use their personal health insurance, the medical card will be secondary, but it will not be managed care.

Concern was expressed about foster parents receiving cold-calls requesting confidential information with no preparation regarding information sharing and their resistance to share confidential information. Debra acknowledged that the information did not go out in a check stuffer, so only staff received the information in advance. She will ensure that information is shared on various avenues and they will consider allowing IlliniCare staff to hold interviews in local DCFS offices to reassure caregivers about sharing information.

Director Smith noted the importance of having people that are totally dedicated to medical and behavioral health issues, getting to know the children and youth and in real time and working to

see that their needs are met. He said that these relationships will enhance the support that is needed.

State Guardian Report

Janet Ahern

Janet Ahern, the DCFS Guardianship Administrator, thanked the Director and Debra for their dedication to advocacy for children. She stated that they are making an adoption chain in her office and they are using it for a holiday centerpiece. She stated that she learned a lot this week doing visits, including one child was going to undergo a biopsy, noting that she was reminded of the resilience of children.

The Office of the DCFS Guardian may be called when a MINOR youth in care has an issue in one of the following areas:

- Personal Injury cases
- Inheritances
- Criminal cases
- DCP Investigations
- School discipline
- Subpoenas
- Juvenile Delinquency Summons
- Name changes
- Identity Theft.

This list is not meant to be exclusive, as there are many more issues that foster children and their foster parents face that are not covered by the Normalcy Act. This list covers primarily the legal issues MINOR youth in care may face. DCFS has a procedure in place, DCFS Procedure 327 that details the consent and legal issues handled by the Office of the DCFS Guardianship Administrator.

The general phone number in the Guardian's office, answered during regular business hours is (312) 814-8600. After-hours, the number to call is the CIRU Unit number (866)503-0184.

A council member asked about getting support for a youth from another state placed under Interstate Compact. It was noted that this concern should go to Julie Barbosa rather than to the Guardian's Office or the Adoption Unit. It was pointed out that collaboration between states is sometimes challenging and Illinois cannot control other states.

National Training Development and Curriculum Grant Update

Christine Feldman

NTDC stands for the National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster/Adoptive Parents which is a federal grant that is a 5-year cooperative agreement from the Administration on Children, Youth & Families. This grant will be used to develop and then evaluate a state-of-the-art training program to prepare foster and adoptive parents to effectively parent children exposed to trauma and to provide these families with ongoing skill development needed to understand and promote healthy child development.

The grant was awarded in October 2017 to Spaulding for Children, in partnership with Dr. Bruce Perry and the Child Trauma Academy (CTA); The Center for Adoption Support and Education

(C.A.S.E.); the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC); National Council for Adoption (NCFA); and the University of Washington (UW). Illinois has been selected to be one of the 8 sites to participate in this grant. At the end of the grant period, Illinois will have access to a free, comprehensive curriculum that has been thoroughly evaluated, which can be used to prepare, train, and develop foster and adoptive parents.

The National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster/Adoptive Parents (NTDC) is being designed for families who are fostering and/or adopting children through the public child welfare system as well as those adopting through an intercountry or private domestic process.

The NTDC curriculum will be comprised of three components:

- 1) **Self-Assessment:** Parents will complete an assessment before, during, and after the classroom-based training. Information gained from the initial assessment will help the trainer tailor the classroom-based material to the specific needs of the group participants. The second and third assessments are designed to help parents better understand their capacity, progress, and specific areas in which they might need to seek additional learning opportunities.
- 2) **Classroom-Based Training:** This dynamic and interactive curriculum will provide concrete information on the roles and responsibilities of foster/adoptive parents and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to effectively parent children who have experienced trauma. Each module will have clearly delineated learning objectives that not only build on skills taught in previous lessons but also align with competencies identified as common characteristics of successful foster and adoptive parents.
- 3) **Right-time Training** Participants will be able to guide their own continued learning and obtain information at the time they need it through ongoing access to training and resources. Video and written materials will be available through an app or Web-based platform, making resources easily available for parents to continue building their skills over time as their children transition through different developmental stages.

In Illinois, the curriculum will be piloted in the Northern Region and in Cook Central, and the comparison area is the Central Region. The Train the Trainers will take place at the end of February 2020, and the NTDC curriculum will be offered in the Northern Region and Cook Central beginning in April 2020. We have the opportunity to participate actively in the evaluation and to provide feedback on the curriculum. We will need 70 families to complete the NTDC training and participate in surveys for the evaluation in the Northern Region and Cook Central and 70 families to participate in surveys for the evaluation in the Central Region. We will end up with a free comprehensive, state of the art pre-service training that has been created for our use here in Illinois. The final curriculum will be disseminated across the United States in 2022.

**IAAC Breakout:
Adoption Update**

Sylvia Fonseca and Kelly King

Sylvia reported that the magnets have been ordered and should be delivered by January 1, 2020. They will be included in the welcome packets to all new adoptive parents and guardians. They will be taken to adoption month events if they are received in the office soon.

Each region is getting a new worker to assist with Post Adoption calls. In addition, a clerical staff will be posted and housed in Cook to assist with the phone bank and anything else related to post-adoption.

Adoptions are still conducting quarterly meetings around the state. It was noted that Illinois is in the best in the Country when it comes to providing post-adoption services. Kelly and Sylvia are continually evaluating, reviewing ways to improve services and are in the process of possible expansion. They are planning to update the website.

Family First is changing quickly and steadily. Post Adoption has been identified and being included in the process. Council members encouraged to attend Town Hall meetings posted on the D-Net to share their input.

Dr. David Cross presented an TBRI training overview and there were several A.S.A.P. providers, council members and other DCFS staff in attendance and support is requested. Sylvia is working with Dr. Cross to see if they can allocate slots specifically for ASAP/DCFS at their upcoming 5-day training. She is also sharing the information with Juvenile Justice Dually Involved Liaison Antwan Turpeau and Kristie A. Schneller, Court Improvement Program (CIP) Coordinator as this training would be a great foundational base statewide for all areas that intersect with Child Welfare.

Sylvia is meeting with Janet Ahern's team regarding immigration issues. They are also sharing issues and concerns from Adoptive Parents and Guardians regarding the Managed Care roll-out. Any IlliniCare concerns should be referred to Kelly King, copy Sylvia Fonseca, so that the information can be forwarded upward.

Communications/Social Media

Jen Florent

Jen requested that council members take pictures with the Adoption Month paper chains, window clings, and bracelets, and use the assigned hashtag when posting on social media. She stated that Facebook has a profile picture frame up that can be used, as well. Pictures will be posted on the official DCFS Facebook page and other social media profiles, as well as on the DNET.

Karen Taylor handed out bracelets on Halloween during a trunk-or-treat event at her Elks Club. She was given a \$500 donation check, and an additional \$15 cash donation, after speaking to parents and discussing adoption awareness from the Champaign Lodge. She will soon begin writing a grant proposal for next year.

Maripat Oliver requested that council members inform request the number of bracelets they believe they will need to cover each region/area about midway through the year, because she only made 10,000 this year, and that simply wasn't enough.

Council Business

Membership Report

Mark Werner

The IAAC has membership openings, but they are mostly in Cook. Many openings are for adoptive parents, and there is one adoptee opening. Adoptee members can come from anywhere

in the state. He noted that any recommendations for Cook County members will be very much appreciated.

The Council continued the training discussion from the joint meeting. Some of the discussion centered around TBRI Training.

Q: Is TBRI evidence-based? We cannot move forward if it is not 50% evidence-based.

A: TBRI is evidence-based just not as high as the standard. There is a push for the requirement of 50% evidence-based to be lowered. It is promising. First, we do need to gather the momentum for this training and prove our interest and belief in it so that we can move on to the next steps.

MOTION: *Julie Yelverton made the motion to recommend and support comprehensive utilization of Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) for adoptive parents, foster parents, intact families, and preventive service providers including residential treatment centers, schools, juvenile justice systems, daycare, and all other entities DCFS interacts with. Seconded by Natalie Miller, the motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Approval of September 6, 2019 Meeting Minutes **Council**

MOTION: *Maripat Oliver made the motion to approve the minutes from September 6, 2019. Danny Tolliver, Jr., seconded. The motion passed.*

Approval of October 4, 2019 Meeting Minutes **Council**

MOTION *Danny Tolliver, Jr., motioned to approve the minutes from October 4, 2019. Beth Hunter seconded this motion. The motion passed.*

Karen Taylor motions that one of the goals for the next year be to establish the IAAC both in policy and legislation. Seconded by Kathleen Bush. All in favor, motion carried.

Council Discussion

Q: Is there a way to know what the committees are and how to join one?

A: The updated Committee Lists will be added to the binders later.

Q: Could binders be provided on a flash drive?

A: This is a possibility to be considered. The council may wish to ask Terry McGlothlin about when she returns for her 75-day contract.

Q: Kids are abusing the system because of the 30-day hold policy. When released they continue to act out or behave recklessly because they know they will be held for only 30 days. Who do we talk about this and power forward with changes?

A: We have a lack of residential treatment. Mark Werner will talk to Antoine about next steps and ideas. Incarceration is traumatic and should not be the go-to.

LGBTQI+ Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee **Mark Werner**

They are looking for at least two foster parent representatives to join the subcommittee. All foster parents are welcome; ideally the foster parent identifies as L, G, B, T, Q, I, or as an ally or has foster youth who identify as L, G, B, T, Q, I. They are currently meeting once a month for two hours. Phone participation is available.

Council Binders**Elizabeth Richmond**

When meeting announcements are distributed, it is important for council members to reply right away, especially if they need lodging. They will be addressing and edit the bylaws at the next meeting. (There will be a phone conference before then where the bylaws will be looked at as well.) Copies of updated Committee Goals, Outcomes, and Assignments will be provided at the next meeting to be added to the binder. The history of the Council should also be added and provided at the next meeting. There is a need for a three-hole punch every meeting.

IlliniCare**Elizabeth Richmond**

Elizabeth Richmond nominated Sylvia Fonseca, Kelly King, Karen Taylor, herself, Kathleen Bush, Cara Siebert, Amy Trotter, Keeley Giles, Natalie Miller and Julie Yelverton to work on the language of the IlliniCare post-adoption piece. They will determine a meeting schedule.

Travel and Reimbursement**Elizabeth Richmond**

Elizabeth said that council member travel forms are due to Michelle Grove and Gwenn Eyer by Wednesday November 13, 2019. Parking passes were distributed.

Stakeholder Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Upcoming Agenda Items:

Bylaws

Committee break-outs

Minutes

Celebration planning

IlliniCare

NTDC Update

Post-Adopt Update

TBRI Update

New Jersey Tuning into Teens Update

Presentation on Midwest Adoption Center/Dawn Saphir-Pruett.

MOTION: Danny Tolliver, Jr. made a motion to adjourn. Maripat Oliver seconded. All in favor, the motion carried.

Next Meeting: February 7, 2020, at the Chicago Marriott Suites Downers Grove, 1500 Opus Place, Downers Grove, Illinois.