



Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

MEETING AGENDA
February 5th, 2021
WebEx videoconference
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

AAC Members Present	AAC Members Absent	Guests	DCFS Staff
Mary Kay Collins	Beth Hunter	Christine Feldman	Hope Bartz
Katie Friend	Natalie Miller	Gabriel Foley	Erica Cabrera
Keely Giles	Maripat Oliver	Rachel Hoyt	Jason Cummins
Laurel Meade	Danny Tolliver	Gayla Webster	Gwenn Eyer
Alex Montgomery			Sylvia Fonseca
Shirley Padera			Kara Hamilton
Elizabeth Richmond			Kelly King
Danielle Sanders			Monica Mosley
Cara Siebert			
Brittney Sprouse			
Crystal Rekart			
Karen Taylor			
Amy Trotter			
Karen Wardlaw			
Mark Werner			
Jeremy Wheeler			
Julie Yelverton			

Welcome and Introductions
Approval of November 6th, 2021 Minutes

Elizabeth Richmond / Mark Werner
Council

The minutes for the November 6th Joint Meeting were presented. Motion was made by Julie Yelverton to approve the minutes. Kara Siebert seconded the motion. The motion to accept the meetings passed unanimously.

Quality Improvement Center Update

Christine Feldman

Christine Feldman indicated they continue working with the Adoption Unit and Illinois Adoption Advisory Council (IAAC) members regarding the Adoption Support and Preservation (ASAP) manual to outline the work of the ASAP program and aligning it with the program plan. Currently contracted with Ethos to place it on a user-friendly platform. The review/revamping on the 10-hour Caring and Sharing training for adoptive/foster parent is coming along. It includes four videos, a training guide, and questions. It will be a 1-hour program. They are also working on a Spanish version. Kristine indicated she can present the final version to the IAAC for members to view the training. Suggested a meeting in March for possible viewing.

Office of Caregiver and Parent Support Update

Michelle Grove

Sylvia can bridge the gap when Katie Friend identifies the families. She said that they may need to start offering the Master Adoptive Program (MAP) as the case heads into legal screening/ termination of parental rights. MAP will support parents as they make the decision for their family regarding the child. MAP should provide support for the first year, linking adoptive parents to the ASAP program, etc. Regular contact the first year, quarterly the second year, etc. If the parents are engaged in an ASAP program or counseling, the services can continue. The council recommended quarterly follow up contact. Regularly offer an “opt out” option. Council members would like to see a shorter timeframe to consummation of adoption and strong outcomes re: well-being, placement stability, use of ASAP services, and permanency. Utilize surveys like the private agencies to capture outcomes.

Gayla Webster, MAP, has been in her position for many years. She reported that she doesn't get a family until after they sign the family commitment form. Her goal is to identify services and supports for each family, assisting with the Adoption Specialist and paperwork, attend Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings, and maintain a minimum of monthly contact until the adoption is finalized. Adoptive parents often pull out after about six months, depending on their needs.

Motion was made by Julie Yelverton that the Department should develop an Adoption Support Specialist position to work with all types of adoptive families in Illinois. Laurel Meade seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Statewide Adoption Update

Sylvia Fonseca/Kelly King

Sylvia introduced the new Statewide Permanency Administrator. Reported that in addition to other topics previously addressed, they are moving forward with web updates to make it mobile responsive and user friendly. They are looking at developing consistency across the state. On the post adoption side, things are moving slowly but surely, according to Kelly King. Post adoption continues to move-working on post adoption manual. She has held meetings to gather information about cross-cultural adoption and cultural competency. They are looking at ways to shore up supports across the board. Sylvia recognized Erica Cabrera who reported that they are ending the Permanency Task Force. They are ending the project with about 7 specialized kids. She said that it is a bittersweet ending, but Erica is moving to the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support where this support work will continue. The Adoption Unit is planning to move about 140 cases to adoption.

Greenlight Family Services Update

Katie Friend

Katie Friend continued to encourage workers and agency to list the youth. Receive 4 to 5 referrals monthly since COVID and are hopeful to increase these referrals. Also, in contact and continue to work with the Adoption unit. Revising the website for workers to make a referral. Continue to meet with youths and families through Zoom to help make those matches. Also working on recommendations and revisions to Procedure 309.40. Valerie Darby presented information on adult guardianship. No fee to these families of Youth-in-Care (YIC) who are seeking to be adopted despite being a legal adult but cannot function as their own guardian and those from post adopt children that are turning 18 years old. Referrals can be made about 6 months before 18 years old and the legal process can be finished in approximately 6 months.

YouthCare Managed Care Service Update

Rachel Hoyt

Last year really was used to tighten up the program and work on any issues. Year two is to help build up a resource network and supportive connections for adoptive parents. Team has grown from 7 to 35 and are really focusing on quality training for the staff to help provide quality services to the families. There is a National Training Institute (NTI) pilot training that could be beneficial that Rachel indicated they are looking to incorporate. Questions and concerns persist with providers calling/naming YouthCare by different names (Meridian/Illini Care). YouthCare continues to provide outreach/training/information to providers to resolve this issue. Post Adopt children are being assigned to specific care coordinator immediately upon receiving the information about child. There were suggestions provided to improve service case coordination.

Foster Parent Handbook

Council

Needing to update the foster parent handbook. Requesting that the IAAC take the portion of the foster care handbook that deals with adoption for the revisions. Wanting to provide a solid resource of adoptive and foster parents. There was a subcommittee previously established but it has been quite some time. Last update was in 2014. Currently working with Foster Parent Support Specialist, Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council, and Policy for revisions. Chapter 7 deals with adoption services. Julie, Cara, Danielle, Katie, Alex, and Karen. Elizabeth will send out the previous Section 7 and will also establish and call with Michelle's group to work on Section 7. Looking to have the revisions and recommendations by the end of June 2021.

Committee reports

Bylaw Committee

Mark Werner

This was tabled to April due to a request from the Department of Children and Family Services administration

Membership Committee

Mark Werner

Two openings in Cook and one additional opening. Spanish speaking would be a great addition and will work to get the forms in Spanish

Data Committee

Julie Yelverton

The Federal government is not tracking disruption or dissolution adoptions. Dissolution is where adoption is legally final but then dissolved. Disruption occurs prior to legal adoption. Kelly continues to work with legislation regarding these issues. The committee continues to explore if families are working with services (post or pre-adoptive, types of adoptions, a range of demographic of family, and reasons stated for the disruption). Stephanie Wolfe worked with the committee and provided specific terminology to ensure everyone is referring to the same issues.

Stakeholder Comments

None

Agenda items

Adoption support specialist update.

Video from Christine

Nominating committee

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Julie Yelverton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Danielle Sanders seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: April 23rd, 2021
Location/Type: WebEx videoconference