



Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Serving Adoptive and Guardianship Families
Joint Meeting with Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
MINUTES
April 8, 2022 9:00 a.m. – 12 p.m.
WebEx videoconference

IAAC MEMBERS PRESENT	IAAC MEMBERS ABSENT	GUESTS	STAFF
Mary Kay Collins	Maripat Oliver	Kelly Duda	Jody Carricker
Keely Giles	Shirly Padera	Heather Breems	Sylvia Fonesca
Alex Montgomery	Danielle Sanders	Nancy Farquar	Charlotte Gallagher
Crystal Rekart	Danny Tolliver	Aneliya Kostova	Tiffany Norton
Elizabeth Richmond, past chair	Karen Wardlaw	Christine Schneider	Jennifer Eblen-Manning
Cara Siebert		Julie Yelverton	Christina Schneider
Brittney Sprouse		Monica Mosely Cantrell	Kim Willis
Karen Taylor			
Mark Werner, past chair		Sylvia Fonesca	

Welcome/Introduction

Council members and staff logged on early to network. Keely Giles, IAAC chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. She welcomed everyone and noted that this meeting is being recorded. Charlotte Gallagher, OCPS, conducted an IAAC voice roll call. Present: Mary Kay Collins, Keely Giles, Alex Montgomery, Crystal Rekart, Brittany Sprouse Karen Taylor, Elizabeth Richmond and Mark Werner.

Approval of March 11, 2022 Minutes

Council

MOTION: Mary Kay Collins made the motion to approve the March 11, 2022 minutes. Crystal seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously through roll call voice vote.

Statewide Adoption Update

Sylvia Fonseca

There is ongoing work on subsidies, prospective adoptive parents must go through Adoption Conversion training. Parents must complete adoption training as part of the adoption process. There have been concerns about how much content is absorbed when completing online trainings. There is no training requirement for fictive kin or guardianship families. There is no way to track engagement or level of comprehension of provided online trainings. There is pressure to provide information or trainings for guardianship families.

Updates made to the Committee List

Keely Giles

Nominate candidate for co-chair will go out and member can send nominations to the IAAC mailbox.

Nomination committee

A form for nominations for a co-chair to go out via email.

Adoption Only Homes, Policy Guide 2017.04

Christina Schneider

There have been private agencies using more adoptive only homes. Several years ago, the state changed the policy around adoption and outside the foster care system. There is no requirement to be licensed for private adoptions and agencies working on adoptions for children who are legally free. There is very limited adoption only cases. Many agencies have other safe guards in places for adopt only homes. Many of the adopt only homes have to pay for their own home study. It is not clear which agencies do adopt only and things appear to vary throughout the state.

Follow up from Julie B. APSR presentation

Jennifer Eblen-Manning

The presented data that shows the progress of the PIP, it addressed what services are needed and delays that are occurring. There was a discussion regarding there not being enough providers, a lack of mental health providers, long wait lists, and many do not feel supported in finding the services due to caseworkers being overwhelmed. Once the children do achieve permanency, the families are required to find their own services and supports. There is urgent need for trauma informed services and providers with an understanding of the adoption process. This is statewide issue. There is less information about trauma informed care. Crisis services are desperately needed to address the trauma from the journey of foster care, exposure to substance abuse, domestic violence and other struggles. There are so many missed opportunities to address these ongoing issues. In the past, there were large teams of adoption specialists that are now very limited. Matching children with appropriate homes for the child and not just placing children in a foster home needs to be a priority. There is a need for rebuilding trust with caseworker, having better goals, and concurrent planning. Training has improved greatly.

Office of Caregiver and Parent Support Update

Break Out Sessions

Barriers about Subsidized Guardianship were addressed. Key issues include getting services in a timely manner and getting services to birth parents. We expect parents to meet their goals in a timely manner is not realistic. There are also fears about rights not being terminated in regard to guardianship. There are also concerns about visitation during guardianship. Some believe that adoption is the best option and guardianship is really the second-best option. Overall, more information is need about guardianship and what that would look like.

They also reported inconsistencies with the courts. The courts won't terminate rights until a resource is located but many parents won't be considered a resource until rights are terminated. The barrier identified is the court's preference for adoption. Guardianship is usually reserved for relative placements.

Many youth want adoption rather than guardianship because guardianship does not feel as safe for youth. Foster parents feel that guardianship is a less permanent option and that the child could be returned home voluntarily or through the courts at a later date

Membership Committee The committee developed an email blast to guardianship parents to get new members. Keely approved the email and it went to Michelle for approval.

Permanency Workgroup

They will be meeting with Michelle Grove.

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Committee Reports

Legislative / Public Policy Committee

No update.

Membership Committee

Karen Taylor

Updated the list during WebEx and will follow up with new members.

Workgroup Reports

Communication Workgroup

Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth reported they have been very busy working on the PATH website and refreshing the logo. They council looked at three different logos. OCPS will send out surveys to pick the logo.

Stakeholder Comments

None

Public Comments

None

MOTION: Cara made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Alex seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously through roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:44am

Next Meeting: June 17th, 2022, 9 a.m. – Noon via WebEx