

**Meeting of the  
Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council  
Doubletree Hotel, 1000 Eastport Drive, Collinsville, Illinois  
February 15, 2019  
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
APPROVED MINUTES**

<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>GUESTS</b>	<b>GUESTS (cont'd)</b>
Gladys Boyd	Katy Cotts	Mark Becker	Lisa Massa
Donna Gregory	Arrelda Hall-Johnson	Tina Bilzing	Michelle Massey
Gordon Hannon (p-phone)	Maya Maclin	Leslie Boyd	Carolyn Needle
Rachel Hoyt (p)	Kate Monte	Christina Bruce	Brie Nelson
Ken Keefe	Denise Spires	Claudia Dancy-Davis	Lisa Nicoloff
Harriet Kersh	<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>	Glenn Eyer	Paula O'Neal
Susan McConnell (p)	Sue Allen	Keely Giles	Patricia Pride
Kellye Norris	Hope Carbonaro	Shannon Graham	Jenna Radford
Rachel Pruess	Carlene Erno	Carmen Grimmett	Heather Skinner
Mary Savage	Gwenn Eyer	Elke Hansen	Beth Steinmetz
Carol Sheley	Jen Florent	Amy Keller	Michelle Wehrle
Lesley Stuart	Deborah Goss	Carrie Kilduff	
Samella Taylor-Lewis (p)	Michelle Grove	Mary Lutz	
Stephanie Tesreau	Lisa Young	Rachel Martin	

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Carol Sheley**

SWFCAC Chairperson Carol Sheley welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and council members and guests introduced themselves.

**Final Report to the Director**

**Carol Sheley**

There were no final reports to the Director. The monthly Director's Report was submitted as required by law.

**Approve SWFCAC Minutes from 11/16/18**

Mary Savage made the motion to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2018 SWFCAC meeting. Donna Gregory seconded, and the motion carried. No meeting was held in January because it was cancelled due to the forecast for unfavorable travel conditions.

**Legislative Report**

**Alexa Koziol**

Gwenn Eyer reported on the information Alexa Koziol provided.

*HB9* – the Paid Maternity Leave Act requires private employers with 50 or more employees to provide six weeks of paid leave for an employee who takes leave to care for a newly adopted child under 18 years of age or a newly placed foster child under 18 years of age or a newly

adopted or newly placed foster child older than 18 years of age if the child is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

*HB190* – Academic Support amends the school code. Provides that beginning with 2019-2020 school year the school board shall require its schools to connect at-risk students in need of academic support to either community-based or in-school academic support; defines at-risk student. Provides that each school district shall inform the parent or guardian of an at-risk student about the community-based or in-school academic support available in that school district or the community in which the school district is located.

*HB909* – Children’s Advocacy Interview provides that consent is not required for a forensic interview to be electronically recorded and that failure to record does not render a forensic interview inadmissible. Adds a definition and modifies a definition and amends the Freedom of Information Act making conforming changes.

*HB1551* – Juvenile Court – Family Support Program amends the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Administrative Act. Provides that a child shall continue to be eligible for an Individual Care Grant if the child is placed in the guardianship of DCFS under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 because this child requires care in a residential treatment facility and an application for the Family Support Program was pending with the Department of Healthcare and Family Services or an active application was being reviewed by the Department when the guardianship order was entered.

## **Communications**

### **Jen Florent**

Jen announced that Debra Dyer-Webster has been appointed DCFS Interim Director. She also reported that the DCFS Scholarship application program is open until March 31, 2019. There are other resources available if youth do not qualify for the DCFS scholarship. Information may be found on the DCFS external web site and on Facebook and Twitter. The fourth annual legislative Shadow Day is coming up on May 14 and 15. Orientation will be conducted on the 14<sup>th</sup> to prepare them. They will go to the Capitol on the 15<sup>th</sup> for Shadow Day. Jen will distribute the link for kids to sign up. Communications uses social media to share information including, events like Shadow Day, basketball leagues, job postings, etc. The council should publish its council Email address on the DCFS external website:  
[dcfs.statewidefostercareadvisorycouncil@illinois.gov](mailto:dcfs.statewidefostercareadvisorycouncil@illinois.gov).

## **SWFCAC 2018 Outcomes and 2019 Goals**

### **Council**

Public Relations – The committee has submitted the draft text to update the SWFCAC brochure. The will review, revise and print the brochure when received from Communications. The committee will collaborate with other committees to send informational announcements and postings to Jen for social media posts. Chairperson Donna Gregory will collect information to submit. Her Email address is [Beegees5@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Beegees5@sbcglobal.net).

Health Care – In 2018 this committee set up participants for focus groups and established other supports for the roll-out of Managed Care. Since Managed Care is currently on hold, the committee is on hold. A new chairperson should be appointed since Rachel Hoyt had to step down.

Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS) - their wildly important goal was to provide Foster Parent Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS) or mentors to all Illinois licensed homes. They

will continue to work to understand ways private agencies utilize mentors and other support positions. They will identify supports and support groups throughout the state and provide a statewide list of resources including support groups. They will forward information to PR Committee for use on social media.

Policy / Legislation – The committee will continue to review policy and procedure, stressing the need for clarity and inclusive communication.

Training – Harriet reported that having the Director’s support for their recommendation to be included in developing and reviewing foster parent training, with the resulting strategies put forward by the training office was a good outcome in 2018. One of their immediate committee goals for 2019 is to review draft Foster Parent Support Specialist training.

Respite – Gladys stated that foster parents need to have stable respite across the board. DCFS should pay for respite to minimize disruption. It was suggested that the committee set a goal to compare the way different regions/agencies manage respite supports before sending a recommendation to the new Director.

### **Intensive Placement Stabilization**

**Jen Marett**

Due to a last-minute speaker conflict, this presentation was postponed to the next meeting.

### **Illinois Families Now & Forever Newsletter**

**Council**

The council will work with the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council to try to bring back the newsletter. Council members may submit articles for consideration. The deadline for article submission is March 15. Possible articles include regular columns from each council, regional updates, a Foster Parent Law column, etc. Jen said that she’d work with the Director to have a Director’s column in each issue. Some issues have fairly standard content, i.e., Foster Parent Appreciation Month, Illinois State Fair and Water Safety in the May issue. Submissions should go to the SWFCAC Email address: [DCFS.StatewideFosterCareAdvisoryCouncil@illinois.gov](mailto:DCFS.StatewideFosterCareAdvisoryCouncil@illinois.gov).

### **Foster Parent Handbook**

The Foster Parent Handbook was last updated in 2014. Committees/ council members will review sections of the handbook, submitting suggested revisions in writing.

### **Southern Region Welcome**

**Hope Carbonaro, RA**

Hope welcomed the council to the Southern Region. She noted that she has a history with the council as a past member. She said that these days the council must concentrate even more on what the council really wants in order to see change. Hope noted that the council has been through eleven directors in eleven years and has seen practice swing back and forth. She noted some things that have been started that she’d like to see continue, i.e. Birth to Three and the core practice model with the beneficial Child & Family Team meeting approach.

Hope stated that she didn’t realize how many calls come in that involve serious injury and child death. Some deaths are accidental, i.e., safe sleep, and others are caused abuse and/or neglect. She indicated that using the 4DX model guides steps to change outcomes and allows the system to pull out a little piece and say, “Let’s change practice around this and see what makes a

difference.” She said that the council should evaluate and move to the next thing if the first one does not work. Hope suggested that she would like to return to the council to get advice re: what things should be the focus in Southern Region.

Hope stated that our state currently ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in permanency in the United States. The Department is taking fewer children in, but once they come into care, the state is not good on permanency. Our Immersions Sites offer strength-based care. In Southern Region Immersion Site, they are revising the way they conduct Child & Family Team meetings. They have contracted with agencies to be their fiscal agents to access money more easily. Engaging the foster parents is important and they are finding that birth parents want foster parents to be involved. Getting parents engaged and involved is still challenging but changing the way staff think and talk to birth parents and bringing foster parents to the table will have a tremendous benefit over time.

The Department has to start looking at urgency around permanency. If children come into care, they need to focus on the first 12 months, determining what can be done as a team to promote reunification. Once moving into the 12 to 24-month range, they must strongly look at concurrent planning with adoption and guardianship options. The Department’s typical term of care is three years, and children and youth are often not reunified with birth parents until that mark. The Department must work with courts, staff, foster parents, birth parents, etc. Everyone must come together focusing on the family. Family First allows the opportunity through a federal waiver to work with prevention, working with families before they enter the system. Staff should use flex funding to cover needs. Hope’s continued goal is to try to tackle one thing at a time, prioritizing goals within reason. She welcomes the council’s input. She feels honored to do this work and she is thankful for the opportunity. Sometimes it is important to “manage up,” sharing information, knowledge and experience with new workers, to nurture them in the best interest of the child. Sometimes one must go up the chain, but first people should try to work directly with the worker.

#### Committee Reports

\*Policy/Legislation – Stephanie Tesreau was appointed to chair the Legislative arm of this committee. Ken Keefe reported on the Policy Committee meeting. Ken Keefe made the motion that the council approve recommended changes to Rule 377 changing the age from 21 to 26 to align with the definitions of children and young adults as listed in the federal Affordable Care Act. Gordon Hannon seconded, and the motion carried. The recommendation will be submitted to the office of Child and Family Policy.

Ken addressed issues in the Fictive Kin Law noting that a foster parent has no appeal rights when denied for a sibling coming into care. The committee’s fictive kin recommendation was tabled until the council can bring in a presenter, i.e. Tina Franklin, to clearly address current policy and procedure, what the policy is for changing requirements, and what steps need to be taken to revise policy.

\*Training Committee – Harriet briefly discussed the work of reviewing the draft FPSS curriculum.

\*FPSS – The committee met 11/15 and will work to gather resources from around the state.

\*Health Care Committee – Due to her new job within the managed care system, Rachel had to step down and the council needs a new chairperson.

\*Hospitality/Marketing – Donna reported that draft text has been submitted for the updated SWFCAC brochure. They will work to finalize the brochure and plan to regularly contribute to the Illinois Families Now & Forever newsletter and on social media via Jen in Communications.

NOTE: Some committee reports were included in the earlier Outcomes and Goals discussion.

### Regional Reports

Michelle reported that she will request funding for regional councils to assist with refreshments, etc.

Northern – Donna Gregory reported that she and Rachel Pruess participated in a meeting with the FPSS and the AA to set goals. The next regional meeting will be held twice on March 14, with the same format morning and evening, to build momentum. A letter will go out to private agencies within the region and they've developed a flyer for foster parents within the region.

Central – Ken Keefe reported that the Central Region will have a phone conference 10:30 a.m. on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Many meetings have been cancelled due to weather.

Cook South – Kellye reported that no meeting was held in January. Their next meeting will be held at 9a.m February 19 at 6201 South Emerald.

Southern Region – Quarterly regional calls involve foster parents and staff from throughout the region. They held a January meeting where they discussed training issues and the hospitalization issue. New offices and new foster parents were on the call. Their next call is April 23<sup>rd</sup>. They would like to do a Fall Foster Care Conference with foster parents, potential foster parents, agency workers, legal staff, etc. It might be panel-driven, focusing on birth families and reunification, foster parent stresses and successes, etc. Training credit would be offered, and they may arrange CEU's, too.

### Reports from Other Councils/ Committees/ Workgroups

#### \*CWAC

Mary Savage reported that the call yesterday primarily dealt with the departure of the DCFS Director. Michelle referenced the call discussion re: using flex funds for reunification efforts. They've changed the method for accessing service funds for birth families to support reunification, i.e., providing bus passes, daily transportation, or providing house cleaning if birth parents needed someone to help clean up a home to prepare for a child's return home. When the team agrees that a service is needed, they can access funds to provide support. Family First is trying more toward intact rather than taking so many children into care. The plan is to provide intensive services to birth families to enable children to remain home.

**\*IFAPA**

Gladys Boyd

Gladys did not formally report. She responded to council questions. She stated that she does not have a current copy of the IFAPA membership list and no regular meetings have been held. They may try to meet in April. They are seeking support from the national organization to get things moving forward.

**AP 13**

**Sue Allen**

Sue introduced the Foster Child Damage Reimbursement Program. The program is not insurance, nor does the Department use any insurance company to process or handle claims for this program. She shared copies of the claim form that is required for reimbursement. They are making revisions, so she asked the council to offer suggestions. The program is intended to provide support to foster parents for damage caused by children and youth in their home. The program covers physical damage, property damage and bodily injury. AP 13 section 8 describes covered incidents. Coverage window: \$50 minimum, up to \$5000. Over \$5000 goes to the Director.

Foster parents must file with personal insurance first. It is recognized that repeated claims may block the opportunity to continue insurance coverage. The council might need to address the issue legislatively due to insurance laws. If uninsured, i.e. no renter's insurance, foster parent must submit a notarized statement to have full coverage. Some insurance companies exclude foster children so in those cases foster parents would be covered. Some insurance companies insist on filing a police report and if it's a theft, the reimbursement program requires a police report, even when foster youth are involved. Claim form must include purchase receipts, three estimates for home repair, two estimates for auto repair, a copy of the police report, significant event report from the worker, photographic evidence, etc. The review committee, department staff, reviews claims for approval. Reimbursement payments may take three to four months. They are trying to improve the payment timing. They will do training to build understanding of the process. Claims should be submitted within 60 days but may be submitted up to one year. Sue requested that council members review the procedure and claim form, submitting any suggested revisions. Sue Allen is available at 312-814-6862 and Sue.Allen@illinois.gov

Stakeholder Comment – None

Public Comment

**Next meeting:** March 8, 2019, The Chateau Hotel, 1621 Jumer Drive, Bloomington, Illinois.

**Future Agenda Items:**

DCFS Director Dyer-Webster

DCFS Medical Director

SSI applications

State Guardian – Janet Ahern

Licensing

Intensive Placement Stabilization

Policy – Tina Franklin

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Therapeutic Foster Care of Oregon

IPS regional representation, standing

Statewide Provider Database

**MOTION:** Stephanie Tesreau made the motion to Adjourn and Leslie Stuart seconded. The motion carried and the meeting concluded at 2:10 p.m. due to weather conditions.