

**Joint Meeting of the
Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council &
Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
Friday, March 9, 2018
Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
APPROVED MINUTES**

SWFCAC Members Present	SWFCAC Members Absent	AAC Members Present	AAC Members Absent	DCFS Staff
Gladys Boyd	Katy Cotts	Natalie Miller	Kathleen Bush	Janet Ahern
Donna Gregory	Cheri Dreska	Maria Nanos	Alice Couch	Michael Deschamps
Arrelda Hall-Johnson	Gordon Hannon	Crystal Rekart	Michelle Price	Carlene Erno
Rachel Hoyt	Darrin Holt	Elizabeth Richmond	Keisha Robinson	Darlene Feliciano
Ken Keefe	Maya Maclin	Danielle Sanders	Shelly Roy	Michelle Grove
Harriet Kersh	Susan McConnell	Karen Taylor		Vanessa James
Mark McDaniel	Trina Rizzo	Danny Tolliver		Kelly King
Kate Monte		Amy Trotter		Royce Kirkpatrick
Kellye Norris		Karen Wardlaw		Gail Mayer
Mary Savage		Mark Werner	Guests	Brooke Miller
Carol Sheley		Jeremy Wheeler	Kem Bakunas	Karen Moredock
Denise Spires		Julie Yelverton	Debbie Freke	Elaine Schmidt
Samella Taylor-Lewis			Terry McGlothlin	Cathy Smith
			Rebecca Thomas	Jared Thomas

Welcome and Introductions – Mark McDaniel & Elizabeth Richmond

The Chairs welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

Approval of SWFCAC 2/16/18 – SWFCAC

Gladys Boyd made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Kellye Norris seconded. Motion carried.

Final Report to the Director – Mark McDaniel

There were no final reports to the Director. The monthly report was sent at the first of the month and council members were copied via email.

Approval of IAAC 2/2/18 Minutes – IAAC Council

Danielle said on page three under support for families, it should state that Dondieneta Fleury-Simmons gave that presentation. ***Mark Werner made a motion to accept as amended. Danny Tolliver seconded. Motion carried.***

Catherine Smith – Regional Administrator, Central Region

Catherine welcomed everyone to Springfield. Resource Recruitment staff (RRS) are working closely with licensing and the field offices to do targeted recruitment and increase the number of foster parents. Last year they helped licensing by contacting 1200 entries from the website.

RRS vetted about 850 of those and referred them elsewhere. They forwarded 322 on to licensing staff. 67 of those homes have become licensed. Nationally they say about 5% of inquiries will be licensed. We were at a 20% rate from inquiry to licensure. The FPSS are working hard to support DCFS licensed foster homes but also are helping some of the private agency homes through support groups and other outreach. The relationships are building and that translates to better outcomes for youth.

Referral – Recruitment Line – Maria Nanos

Dr. Nanos is the Executive Director for the Center for Law & Social Work. She presented on the agency and services they provide. They have been around since 2003. Their main focus is on post adoption families. They hire lawyers and attorneys to work with our families. Maria has close to 30 years of experience in foster care, mostly in child welfare in Chicago. They do adoptions, standby adoptions/guardianship (successor), and adult guardianship for special needs minors turning 18. When someone calls they will get a live person to answer. A social worker will come to their house. They work the case to the point where they can pass it on to an attorney. They also have an advocate housed in juvenile court for any post adopt family that walks in. They contract with DCFS to do mediation. They are also responsible for any post adoption case where there is a death of an adoptive parent. They do family counseling, mostly after death cases. They do educational advocacy that is available for all post adoptive families if they are having trouble with an IEP, expulsions, etc. They have sexual assault counseling that is in the Chicago area. They also manage the Adoption Listing Service (formerly done by the Adoption Information Center of IL – AICI, most recently Healthy Families). In October it came under the Center for Law & Social Work. Katie Friend recently presented to the Adoption Advisory Council on this. It is the adoption listing from DCFS and Wendy's Wonderful Kids which is a grant that Center for Law and Social Work manages. Takes our listed children and matches with perspective adoptive families. They have five full time positions. There is an 800 number for the state of IL. Average phone calls per month is about 350. Many call asking what to do to become foster parents. When they get those inquiries, they ask them where they live, take their information and give them contact information for their area. They call them back in a month to follow up.

To be listed, a youth must have a goal of adoption or substitute care pending termination of parental rights. The programs follow Rule 309.40 and revisions should be completed by the end of March. There are currently 35 youth listed on the DCFS website.

CLSW caseworkers are assigned youth and begin the “matching” process

General Process:

Goal change occurs

If not in an adoptive home caseworker should list

Youth is professionally photographed by Let It Be US

CLSW worker and assigned agency caseworker work together to securely place children.

Barriers:

TPR/Adoptive Home

Caseworkers allowing foster homes more than 60 days to decide on permanency

Turnover within agencies

Cases transferred to another agency

She is trying to raise awareness with juvenile court. They feel strongly about getting children listed.

Q: Do you work with the agencies and let them know? Their agency has had calls from people who want to be licensed to adopt one of the children on the list. Can you talk to the agencies about the expectations?

A: That is often how it starts. We do outreach with Let It Be Us where she tries to rally perspective foster parents. She is happy to talk to agencies more about it.

Q: I adopted in another state and they have a track for legal risk adoption. There was risk that we would lose her. They had this track where they knew who was willing to take these kids who were not legally free. If IL was comfortable with this, it might be another option.

A: Right now, we cannot photograph those kids who are not legally free. After TP we have talked about using a video.

Q: I called AICI but didn't want to foster – wanted to adopt. Back in the 90s there were agencies that would waive the costs if you were adopting a waiting child.

A: If referred to an agency they become foster parents for that agency.

Q: Private agencies receive no funding for licensing. They are depending on that home having placements. This is a lose/lose for private agencies from the financial perspective. Most of our foster care conversions come from people who are willing to do foster care and then adopt.

Q: There was a national site where adoptive families could put their profiles. She was listed but was never contacted. Do you use this resource or ever look nationwide?

A: We stick with IL families and keep the kids with IL families as much as possible. Only if they receive an inquiry from someone outside of IL. The option is there but we try to keep them here. Kelly King said the caseworker makes the decision if it is in the best interest of the child to be placed elsewhere. If the child is moved to another state and there is a failed adoption it would be more difficult for them to find a stable home.

They are DCFS funded. There is also a grant from Dept. on Aging to help those not involved in DCFS.

Q: How many new foster homes do you recruit?

A: She doesn't have that number but approximately 150 have been referred on.

Q: Who responds to the DCFS inquiries on the web?

A: There are glitches, but we will.

Q: Who is responsible for a failed adoption if they are placed in another state?

A: Janet said the law is that if a child is in another state for more than 6 months they are part of that state. We would contact the other state to see what they will do. We negotiate that on a child by child basis. The most important consideration is where is that child's family? Interstate compact ends at adoption.

Q: What is the average length of time a child is on the list before matched?

A: Some have been on the list a long time usually due to high needs. There are also some successes. We are actively matching as many as possible, but she cannot give an average.

Q: Do caseworkers cooperate with listing youth?

A: Yes

Q: AdoptUSKids came to a meeting of the Adoption Advisory Council and offered money to help Illinois after AICI closed. Suggestions were made at the meeting. Where did that money go?

A: Elizabeth said there was never a commitment on our part and it was used in different agencies. We didn't have a Director at the time.

The courts say that we are not doing as well as we could be, so they don't push for TPR. There are a lot of people working on it. We can't go back to the courts until we have it in order. There are five big parts – one is the courts and there are four parts on our side. After those four parts are fixed we can go back to the courts

Psychotropic Drugs – Karen Moredock

Karen works with Health Services statewide. Recent change to the Medicaid approval of medications has brought many calls to her for assistance. Most are when prescriptions are being denied for some reason. When she gets a call, she contacts Medicaid to get answers. She finds that 95% of the time there is no consent on file.

Q: Prior approval is needed each year – if the pharmacy could flag that for us we wouldn't be in a crisis. Others also have that problem.

A: She was getting about 20 calls a day but that is getting better. When there is a problem call her or have the worker call.

Q: Is the consent form something that foster parents can get themselves? Families don't know when the consents expire.

A: Janet said when it is submitted we try to resolve immediately. There is also a help line. If delay in getting consent sometimes the Dr. who is reviewing has questions.

Q: Is it possible to set up a computerized system so that when there is a consent expiring the foster parent can be made aware?

A: That would be helpful. She will share the suggestion.

Q: Recently with a new placement and child can't get meds for two weeks due to consents.

A: Call the Guardian's (Janet's) office at 312-814-8600. They will look at it. The only delay is if Dr. Naylor is trying to reach the psychiatrist. Sometimes it is a consent issue because worker is busy and having trouble getting it to them.

Karen Moredock can be reached at 217-557-5792.

Managed Care – Emily Monk

Medicaid Managed Care is rolling out for the entire population. All will become members of a managed care organization. That will include current youth in care and plans for former youth in care. Enrollees will be in one of 5-7 insurance companies. For DCFS youth that will be Illini Care. They have been a managed care company for a few years now for some Medicaid recipients. We have been targeting July 1st for CFS youth. We are pushing back to October 1st. This is for a few reasons. This will be a significant change for foster parents and DCFS workers. We want to allow time to communicate with people. Meanwhile we don't have a signed contract with Illini yet. We can't start the training process until a contract is signed, which is the largest concern about moving to managed care.

The provider network needs to be sufficient. Kids with high needs will receive ongoing medical care management. Kids health care needs will be assigned to a care coordinator that will talk to the foster parent and caseworker to follow up. Data systems will track claims. Illini will track and reach out to foster parents. With Illini foster parents can call and get help to find services for the youth. It is the state's intention that former youth in care will also be enrolled in Illini Care. Some are currently under another managed care companies and they won't have to switch. Former youth in care have a choice in who provides their health care. The state cannot direct them to be in Illini but can encourage it. Illini Care should be set up better to serve this type of youth. We are trying to build the operational framework to make this happen. For the general population April 1st is the rollout date. She is working on a letter to go to foster parents that they can take to the pharmacy if there is a problem. Until DCFS Youth go into Illini care they will continue to use the Medicaid card. Information on all managed care plans is available at <https://enrollhfs.illinois.gov/>. IlliniCare will not charge co-pays for youth in care or any other enrollees.”

Q: Can adoptive parent select the provider?

A: They can pick a managed care provider. For now, the medical card will still work. No change yet. Illini has not brought on all the providers because the contract isn't signed. Once they start there will be an intensive effort.

Q: Are parents being informed that we are highly encouraging Illini care?

A: There might be fewer options with other agencies. This information will be part of our communication piece.

Q: Will they pay the providers poorly, so they won't sign up?

A: Her understanding is that the rates will be Medicaid rates. There will continue to be some services that are not Medicaid eligible. There will still be contracts with some specialty providers.

She will be happy to come to a future meeting with updates.

Updates from the State Guardian – Janet Ahern

Janet reported that she was at a previous council meeting and someone asked about a 17-year-old that couldn't get adopted. She met the family, acted on your suggestion. She went on a Saturday and talked to the foster parent.

Orthodontia appeals – there were two appeals brought to their attention that DHS might be declining. We won both appeals. Future concerns can be addressed if brought to the Guardian's attention,

They are working with educational advisors and ISBE to try to get a better idea of our expulsions. When we have expulsions, we can get legal representation through Lincoln Land Legal Services. Foster parents should let their Educational Advisors know ASAP of any expulsions.

They are working on a policy on funeral and burials. Currently the body belongs to the family and we cease to be the guardian. DHS gives some funding - \$1653 to the funeral homes. When there is not a state budget they can't even do that. We wrote a policy that we think will be approved in the next couple months that says DCFS can pay an additional \$2,000 for funeral expenses of children who die in care. We will also reach out to providers to work with them on reduced costs.

She and Lisa are the only ones that can sign off on a DNR for a child in care. They monitor the children, attend staffings and use their own consulting physicians. They meet with the youth in the hospital, seek advice from the hospital, talk to the foster and birth family regarding their wishes, and consult with the attending physician. Lisa and Janet are going to visit six children in the next week.

Ken Keefe asked about specific case situations involving a child where the case was moved to adoption and then a sibling was identified, and the child was moved to be with the sibling in an unrelated home. He asked how a decision like that gets made and is it driven by state policy. Mark McDaniel said there are other similar cases throughout the state. Cathy Smith responded that the law requires us to make ongoing diligent search to make placements with siblings. Ideally, we would do the search and find out early in the case if there is a sibling placed with a family that could be a resource. DCFS has an obligation to try to put siblings together. Sibling policy will speak to cases where the siblings can be separated.

Q: If a child is in a foster home for three years and case is near adoption and then a relative is found that might not be in the child's best interest.

A: Janet said it is important to look for the siblings at the beginning of the cases. Cathy said family finding started in 2016 but it has taken us a while to get good at this. There is trauma to the child and the families involved. One of the criteria speaks to the best interest of the child and the rights to have a lifelong attachment to their siblings wherever the child is. When facing this situation if we can get everyone at the table to communicate that might result in the best outcome for the child. Regional Administrators engage staff to engage everyone to make the best decision.

Q: Is there not a concrete timeframe; if a child is in a home for five years and there is a sibling found would they be moved?

A: Janet said we are going to look at the case and try to bring the family together. No, the law does not speak to a time frame. Each case needs to be looked at differently. We will look at any case brought to the level of the Regional Administrator or Guardian to determine what is best today and what will be best ten years from now. These are hard decisions.

Q: Does the fictive kin law play any role in that as well? Do you become part of that fictive kin?

A: Cathy said if the child leaves you and we have a need to secure a resource for the child, at that point you are fictive kin. Sibling placement trumps all.

Q: It is not so much that the foster parent has become attached to the child. There is concern about the best interest. That could psychologically damage that child for the rest of their life.

A: Cathy said we are considering the best interest of the child. She encouraged foster parents to advocate that every agency serving your kids is doing the family finding on the front end. Identifying family early on would be the best resolution. Workers need to reach out to the family members to gauge their interest, so the change happens early. You could advocate with legislators if you recommend a timeframe be added. Her professional opinion would be no. Although she hates to traumatize a child, the reality is that they always tend to prefer to go to family.

Q: What is being done on the front end because there are several cases where this has happened.

A: Cathy said there has been ongoing training for staff to stress the importance of doing this early on.

Janet said when a case comes in we identify other children born to that parent. Those are the things the we are supposed to look at. One of the barriers is it is more difficult to search for those children that have been adopted but they have been doing some changes to the database, so the prior history is available. We are taking steps to prevent this from happening.

Q: Sometimes a child comes into care and the siblings foster/adoptive parent is not aware. Is there an appeal for a placement decision?

A: The GAL can appeal. The Guardian has more control over it. The rule is to bring it the guardian's attention. Notify the region because the faster we do it the better it is. For private agency cases you would contact the Agency Performance Team (APT). The Advocacy Office can tell you who the RA is for each region or the APT monitor for an agency.

Q: In cases where we haven't detected there are siblings but find out after an attachment, does the law allow for using an agreement that once adoption happens there will be visitation?

A: Only informal agreements can be made.

Mark McDaniel thanked the presenters for providing the information, so the council can determine which direction to take.

Update from Council Liaison - Maggie Poteau

Ethics Training – April 1st is the deadline this year. Last year they had trouble getting them. The SWFCAC and AAC have always been good responders. Michelle and Gwenn will be collecting these. Please get them submitted.

We are working on a couple updates for the advisory boards. Rule 428 went around to the boards and councils for review. Policy will have a statement that they must abide by bylaws or rules and procedure rather than listing the bylaws.

Moving forward in FY19, there have been a number of things done behind the scenes on the advisory board portal. She has been working with OITS to put it together. This will be a centralized location for all advisory council information. Anyone will be able to look at minutes, agendas, etc. There will also be an internal facing portion with appointment letters, goals, ethics statements, etc. The DCFS staff liaisons will have access to that. Over the last several years there has been a lot of communication falling through the cracks. This is moving in a robust fashion now. We are starting to move to the new site. It will be up and running by the new fiscal year. There will be a meeting with all liaisons from across the state probably in May to allow for our liaisons to understand their expectations and roles. It will also allow for greater transparency. We are encouraging all the boards and councils to work on shared initiatives and goals for DCFS.

Maggie spoke to the leadership team about Rule 402. At this point they do not have anything they can roll out but are actively working on it.

Council appointment letters are caught up at this time.

Maggie stated that the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council has been a great testament as to the work being done by state councils. You are engaged and active and it is somewhat of a model we are hoping to duplicate. Director Walker discussed the roles of the boards and councils. She has the desire to cultivate fresh new ideas and thoughts in keeping the councils fresh and innovated. She asked that both councils look at rules and bylaws to think about how to ensure officers are fresh and put thought into how you are developing the council. You need to look at diversity and representation from across the board.

IFAPA Update – Gladys Boyd

They are still working on recruitment efforts to hold another conference for caregivers as has been done in the past. They are working with National for direction and hope to have more updates by the next meeting. They will also meet with National to work on what is needed to build the membership. IFAPA updates will be a standing agenda item for both councils going forward.

Discussion:

Kelly King is working on a national training initiative along with the Children's Bureau and Center for Adoption. We are in the mental health stage and trying to make sure those working with our kids are trauma informed and understand how trauma impacts mental health. Twenty-five hours of training starts March 26th and ends September 28th. CEUs are available. This is a

pilot program. Child welfare training will also be available in the next year. Reach out to Kelly if interested.

Jeremy Wheeler suggested council members should check out federal legislation passed on February 9th called the Family First Prevention Services Act. This will significantly undercut the funding to states. They are trying to rid the system of child care institutes. There will be a rise in specialized foster care homes because states cannot afford to pay without reimbursement. Illinois comes out of the waiver October 2018 as long as we turn in our waiver extension.

IAAC and SWFCAC Breakout Meetings

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council continued their meeting separately following a networking lunch with members of the IL Adoption Advisory Council.

The updated Bylaws were distributed.

Committee and Council Reports

Health Care – Rachel Hoyt – No report

Training – Carol Sheley – No report

FPSS – Carol Sheley

Denise is going to chair this committee. A meeting will be set soon to discuss goals.

Policy & Legislation – Ken Keefe

They tried to meet last night but didn't have a quorum. Will meet today re respite following this meeting.

Hospitality – Donna Gregory

Donna will reach out to Gwenn prior to the meeting to assure that council members are aware if there will be coffee or breakfast and share any other helpful details such as the meeting room.

IFAPA – They reported earlier during the joint meeting.

Regional Reports

Central – Carol Sheley

They are planning for the May Foster Parent Appreciation event. Carol said there is a concern coming up regarding the medical cannabis issue. There is not a statute to address this. DCFS initially said that anyone with medical cannabis couldn't foster. January of last year they retracted that and said it would be treated as a prescription and there are policies that state that. Licensing has been putting homes on hold again because they said it was a law and laws trump our policy. In this law it stated that foster homes who take care of children cannot have medical cannabis on premises. Those prescribed medical cannabis have a card that they carry that says they can't carry it, but it has to be locked up on their premises. Carol asked where the law is found. In the discussion she found that it is not an actual law – it is an Act. As a board we need to consider making a recommendation. The Director is also involved. Mary said as a private

agency she has not heard of this. Mark will talk to Michelle about getting someone to come to the next meeting.

Another concern is the Quality of Care Law. They will be contacting legislators with concerns. Clinical has to do a review before a renewal is done in homes that have had investigations. There are homes on hold pending Clinical's approval.

Northern – Donna Gregory

They are working on a foster parent survey to send out online to foster parents to ask questions about how they found out about fostering, how long it takes to get a response, etc. When she gets feedback, she can formulate some of the responses and report back. They are trying to get more people involved.

Southern – Mark McDaniel

They have not had any recent meetings but did receive resignation from Kassie Johnson, Southern Region SWFCAC representative, so we need recommendations for a new council member

Cook Central – Denise Spires

They had a two-hour meeting February 27 on the life of a case. They are trying to increase attendance. They offered food at this last meeting and attendance went from 5 to 19. Meetings are open to both DCFS and private agency foster parents. Their next meeting is scheduled for March 27th.

Cook South – No report

Cook North – No report

Ruth Kirkpatrick said she is working on revisions to TCAF forms for foster parents. She was working on it before, along with the SWFCAC Training Committee, but the ball was dropped when there was a change in administration. There are some changes that need to be made such as removing reference to the Lending Library since it is no longer available. She would like to require better documentation from foster parents on what they got out of the reading materials or videos. The form should reflect what they learned from any outside training they attend. There are a lot of good things out there – trauma, workshops, power to connect simulcast in April. Once complete the form will be available on the VTC.

There was a suggestion to add a “Submit” button to the online form. Michelle will set up a meeting with Ruth and the SWFCAC Training Committee soon.

Agenda Items:

There is a need to have someone speak to us about the medical cannabis procedures. There have been several foster homes placed on hold due to medical cannabis being prescribed to the foster parent and it's use in the home.

Gladys made a motion to adjourn. Kate seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.