

**Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
MEETING AGENDA
June 19th, 2020
Teleconference
9:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.**

SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT	SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT	GUESTS	STAFF
Gladys Boyd	Katy Cotts	Jessica Bullard	Barb Crandall
Kimberly Coniglio	Kate Monte	Claudia Dancy Davis	Fayette Coleman-Gill
Arrelda Hall		Debbie Freke	Jason Cummins
Rachel Hoyt		Maria Levensgood	Gwenn Eyer
Ken Keefe		Brenda Marshall	Jen Florent
Harriet Kersh		Patricia Pride	Lori Gray
Susan McConnell		Elizabeth Richmond	Michelle Grove
Maya Maclin		Rebecca Thomas	
Kellye Norris			
Mary Savage			
Carol Sheley			
Samella Taylor-Lewis			
Stephanie Tesreau			

Welcome and Introductions

Carol Sheley

Carol welcomed participants to the call and handled the introductions. The visitation report went to administration and a summary of outcomes was submitted in the monthly report to the DCFS Director.

MOTION: Approval of April 17th, 2020 Meeting Minutes Harriet Kersh made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. It was seconded by Kellye Norris and the motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mary Savage made the motion for approval of May 18th, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes, as corrected to add Harriet Kersh as an attendee and to correct the time to 12:30. Seconded by Stephanie Tesreau, the motion passed.

Membership Report

Jason Cummins

Jason reported that there were nine candidates that were sent to the director for appointment to the SWFCAC beginning fiscal year 2021. This will leave only one vacant council position in the Cook North region.

Office of Communications Update**Jen Florent**

Jen reported that both State Fairs (DuQuoin and Springfield) were both cancelled for this year. The Department has started a new foster parent recruitment campaign on social media, beginning June 10, 2020. The theme is “Can you foster my future?” Targeted posts are going out weekly across DCFS social media channels. Posters and flyers will be available, upon request. Carol thanked Jen for her work on behalf of our children and families.

Office of Caregiver & Parent Support Update**Michelle Grove**

Michelle reported on the statewide Foster Parent Support Specialist program, noting coverage throughout the state. They have been doing a lot of recruiting, with only four current vacancies. FPSS receive a lot of training, including Mental Health First Aid and Trust-based Relationship Intervention Training. They have numerous resources from these trainings. They extended a grant to the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council for Core Teen training. The training started June 17th and June 18th. This training is also Train the Trainer of which FPSS staff will be providing statewide to foster parents. This training will be offered beginning in September, via FPSS and support groups.

Foster Parent Law Awards**Gwenn Eyer****Foster Parent Law Training**

Gwenn asked council members to complete and return their ballots for the annual Foster Parent Law awards. Three agencies will be recognized for their work with utilizing the Foster Parent Law. She also reported that she is working with UIUC staff to develop an Introduction to the Foster Parent Law training for foster parents and staff. This will be offered as a digital training, with the option to offer in-person, when possible.

Office of Guardian Update**Janet Ahern**

Janet stated that this is a very confusing time for all of us. She noted that counties are allowed to do things differently and sometimes it is very surprising what some counties do regarding their respective courts. Some counties are doing social distancing and are going back to court. Some are limiting the type of hearings that are being conducted and Janet expects that there will be a backlog when court is held more regularly. Foster parents have a right to be heard in court. However, the technical ability of some courts is limited. Let your caseworker know what you want to share and let DCFS legal in that county know if caregivers face resistance. Everyone went home in March and everyone was supposed to stay home. Some requests for travel came in and the Guardian’s Office made a statement that no out-of-state travel was allowed. As the state opened up, everything has gotten a bit lax. In May, she recognized that many requests were coming in for out-of-state travel. Some families could leave the state for different reasons. Toward the middle of May, she, Lori Gray and DCFS administration handed off the

decision-making process to regions and agencies, using guidelines developed through state rules, CDC, and other states' guidelines. The guidelines used dealt with safety and health, then focused on specific health needs of the children and families involved.

Basic guidelines include the following factors:

- 1) What is the purpose of the trip?
- 2) How many states will you travel to?
- 3) What are the safety measures and restrictions in the destination state?
- 4) The rise of Covid-related deaths in the destination state.
- 5) What is the mode of transportation and what are the relate safety measures?
- 6) Are you staying in a private home? What is the social interaction? What are the known risk factors? How many are in the home? What are the sleeping arrangements? If traveling with others, the number was restricted.
- 7) What are the ages and medical conditions of the travelers?
- 8) What might be the impact on the children?
- 9) Follow the Illinois state guidelines re: face masks, social distancing, public gatherings, etc.
- 10) Identify a medical provider in the destination state.
- 11) Demonstrate the ability to self-quarantine, if needed, upon return.
- 12) CFS432 and the Covid questions must be completed and submitted to regional and agency administrators for approval.

Reports from Other Councils/Committees/Workgroups:

***CWAC**

R. Hoyt/H. Kersh/M. Savage

CWAC has not met since the last SWFCAC meeting. The committee is scheduled to meet June 20, 2020.

***IFAPA**

Gladys Boyd/Arrelda Hall

Gladys reported that the chair of the National Association of Foster Parents has retired. Gladys said that they have not yet held any meetings. They currently have a group of foster parents that get together every week to talk and lift each other up. They also have a group where they have prayer every week, with a different pastor coming in each week to lead the prayer. They hope to continue even after the coronavirus.

Regional Reports:

Northern Region Report

Kimberly Coniglio

Kimberly said that foster parents are concerned and have questions about summer travel. She suggested sharing a FAQ list to address this. A new question that has arisen is overnight visits under prudent parenting policies. Do they need permission to travel? Jen Florent referenced a June 1 posting that addressed out-of-state travel. She also referenced issues related to being allowed in court. Foster parents that are used to be allowed in the

court room are sometimes restricted from the Zoom meetings. Counties seem to do it differently. Janet reported that day trips across state lines do not need written approval.

Central Region Report

Ken Keefe/Carol Sheley

Ken stated that there have been some virtual meetings/ parent cafés, etc. during the lockdown.

Cook North

Kate Monte

Kate was not on the call.

Cook South

Maya Maclin/Kellye Norris

Cook Central

Arrelda Hall

They recently sent out safety brochures to all foster parents in the Cook Region. They are looking forward to increased support in the Cook region.

Southern Region

Stephanie Tesreau

Southern Region has not met.

Operations-Division of Permanency Update

Lori Gray

An action transmittal went out Monday to indicate that in-person parent/child visits, sibling visits and caseworker contact are opening up, with guidelines to address concerns. The guidelines focus on safety, with some flexibility from case-to-case. Doing this in a “staged” way will allow the Department to manage issues as they come up. Jen Florent reported that the letter went out late yesterday to all licensed foster parents and is currently posted on the web site. Plans should be made through Child & Family Team meetings, hearing concerns and working to ease anxiety. The letter outlines the steps. This week is the pre-planning stage with CFT meetings starting next week and visits beginning the week of June 26. Adjustments will be made as needed. Workers will begin their monthly in-person visits for traditional and licensed HMR, wearing masks and social distancing as much as possible. Twice-a-month visits may be a hybrid, with both in-person and video visits.

Lori reported that the Department has made some structural changes to their divisions. Agency Performance has moved under Permanency.

She said that every year the Department’s appreciation for foster parents is unending, at all times, but she especially wanted to remind caregivers on the call how thankful the administration is to have foster parents as partners in the work. Janet Ahern concurred,

saying that foster parent efforts have been amazing during the pandemic. She said that at some point we will come to a place when we can start having celebrations again.

Officer Election Results

Kate Monte

Jason reported that Ken Keefe was elected chairperson and Arrelda Hall was elected as co-chair. Ken Keefe and Arrelda Hall both accepted. Kate Monte, the Nomination Committee representative was not available to provide the update.

Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure

Gwenn Eyer

Gwenn reported that the procedure was completed and sent to council members for review.

MOTION: Harriet Kersh made the motion that we send the procedure to the agencies for use, upon approval of their foster parents. Mary Savage seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Clarification was given regarding the location of the Covid information on the DCFS external website.

Diana Blackburn indicated she has not received any letters that were sent out and asked if others have the same issues. Barb Crandall indicated that she can start an email to Deborah Lopez. Barb provided her email address. Jen Florent indicated the mailing list is generated through the IT department.

Stakeholder Comments

There were not comments

Adjourn

MOTION: Kimberly Coniglio made a motion to adjourn; Harriet Hersh seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am

Next Meeting: July 17, 2020, 9:00 a.m., teleconference