

**Meeting of the
Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
Sheraton Lisle Naperville, 3000 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois
June 21, 2019
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT	SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT	GUESTS Continued	STAFF
Gladys Boyd	Donna Gregory	Rachel Kay	Janet Ahern
Katy Cotts	Gordon Hannon	Stevie Knoblauch	Barbara Crandall
Arrelida Hall	Rachel Pruess	Maria Leavengood	Dee Estep
Rachel Hoyt	Samella Taylor-Lewis	Jordan Linson	Gwenn Eyer
Ken Keefe		Maureen Lueder	Jen Florent
Harriet Kersh	GUESTS	Terry McGlothlin	Michelle Grove
Maya Maclin	Angela Barber	Natalie Miller	Jeremy Harvey
Susan McConnell	Patrick Barberousse	Margaret Perry	Donna Lindemulder
Kate Monte	Diana Blackburn	Patricia Pride	Gail Mayer
Kellye Norris	Julie Cebulski	Crystal Rekart	Laticia McAlpine
Mary Savage	Claudia Dancy Davis	Elizabeth Richmond	Karen Moredock
Carol Sheley	Julie Dvorsky	Merry Beth Sheets	Elaine Schmidt
Denise Spires	Courtney Field	Krista Teckenbrock	Corey Shannon
Lesley Stuart	Debbie Freke	Rebecca Thomas	Eva Walker-Outlaw
Stephanie Tesreau	Jen Johnson		

Welcome and Introductions

Carol Sheley

SWFCAC Chairperson Carol Sheley welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:10 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 5/10/19

Stephanie Tesreau made the motion to approve the minutes from the May 10, 2019 SWFCAC meeting. Rachel Hoyt seconded, and the motion carried.

Confidential Education Assistant/Employment

Corey Shannon

Corey is a former alternative schools principal. He started his work in the employment arena 22 months ago, and is working to develop partnerships with businesses to hire youth throughout the state. Portillo's and Krispy Kreme are some of the earlier adopters of this program and more all joining all the time. Corey hosts a job readiness program in the Chicago area and has developed a

tip sheet for caseworkers in other areas of the state to use. He provides support for interviews and connects youth in care with local job fairs. He also works with the Education Division regarding youth attending junior college and utilizing supports available to them there. Corey's Email address is: Corey.Shannon@illinois.gov. His phone number is 312-814-8258. DCFS Communications shares employment information via social media and will share on the DCFS external web site. IFAPA has shared Corey's contact information on their web site and it was noted that the Statewide Youth Advisory Board web site would be another good place to promote the information.

HealthWorks

Elaine Schmidt

HealthWorks of Illinois is a collaborative effort between the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Human Services, and Healthcare and Family Services. DCFS contracts with the HealthWorks Lead Agencies and DHS contracts Medical Case Management Agencies to provide ongoing medical case management for youth in care ages 0-5. This program initially came out of the BH Decree. 302.360 directs the Department's work regarding health care.

HealthWorks Lead Agency Tasks include the following:

- Documents Initial Health Screenings (IHS) in the SACWIS database in the E-health screens.
- Within 48 hours of DCFS notification, contacts foster parent to schedule a Comprehensive Health Evaluation (CHE) which is to occur within the first 21 days of placement.
- Documents the Primary Care Physician (PCP) in SACWIS for each HealthWorks-eligible youth in care.
- Provides Interim Medical Case Management (MCM): Gathers healthcare documentation/medical history during the first 45 days in placement for new wards. After this interim period, this information is shared with the assigned DCFS/POS caseworker and the medical case management is transferred:
 - To a Medical Case Manager under the DHS contract for ongoing Medical Case Management for children, ages 0-5. This includes gathering and sharing ongoing healthcare documentation prior to ACRs.
 - To the assigned DCFS/POS caseworker for children ages 6 and over.
- After the interim medical case management period, HealthWorks updates the Primary Care Physician information for each HealthWorks eligible youth in care.
- HealthWorks staff provide in service training to DCFS/POS staff, foster parents, and healthcare providers regarding HealthWorks services.

Comments/Discussion:

- The Dentaquest number is 888-286-2447.
- If you face challenges refilling psychotropic medication or have other HealthWorks questions contact Elaine Schmidt at 217-557-5782.
- Recommendation: bring back the Health Care Passport format.
- They are working on a web portal for providers that will help with information sharing and continuity of care.

Foster Parent Law Awards

Council

Awards were presented for excellence exhibited in the annual Foster Parent Law implementation plans. Hephzibah and Rutledge received awards for Innovative Approaches to Service Delivery. Lakeside receive an award for Treating Foster Parents with Dignity and Respect. DCFS Southern was awarded for Foster Parent Involvement.

Communications

Jen Florent

Jen noted that Director Smith is speaking at the Asian American Conference, and hopes to attend a future SWFCAC meeting. She also reported that they have a new Associate Deputy in Communications. She stated that the Illinois Families Now & Forever Newsletter was distributed. It was suggested that work begin soon on a back-to-school issue. Michelle Grove stated that she sent out Emails to determine who will take the lead on future newsletters. Jen stated that the deadline to order State Fair tickets is July 5. An Adoption Fair will be held in the Champaign area on July 20. The Duquoin Area Family Picnic will be held August 24. She indicated that she will post the employment opportunities flyers on the youth page on the DCFS external website.

Medicaid Re-Evaluation of In-Home Nursing

Karen Moredock

They are undertaking a reorganization of the procedure for children to receive in-home nursing services. Karen stated that the nursing program is now much harder to get into through Medicaid. Kids with behavioral issues will not qualify. The current kids that are getting nursing will be reviewed by new doctors when they come up for recertification to determine if the child still qualifies for nursing. They can go from the Medically Fragile Waiver to being allowed no hours at all. They are definitely seeing a decrease in hours. Notify the worker if you get a notification that hours are being decreased or cut and have the worker needs to contact Karen immediately because there is a 60-day limit for appeals. Karen submits the records to the DCFS Guardian's legal staff and the DCFS Medical Director for their review. Every child receiving nursing services will undergo a thorough case review. Behavior health coverage will now need to be addressed in a different way, with an alternative way to supplement the hours lost.

Comments/Discussion:

- Skilled nursing requires CAN/LPN rather than RN.
- We will need to beef up things like daycare provision for children with behavioral needs.
- Foster parents need help. If DCFS needs to pay for it, there needs to be a way to address it.
- For further information, contact Karen Moredock at 217-557-2689.
- If services are being denied, foster parents should go up the chain.
- If a child is diabetic, there needs to be a protocol for taking a child in from intake, i.e. Investigations. Caregivers must be trained to care for the child as soon as possible.
- Who should the council address with the concern for children who need more behavioral supports? The medical committee will work with Karen Moredock.
- Daycare coverage ends at three, and children do not enter school until they are five or six so there are gaps that need to be addressed.
- If the council wants to pursue policy change they should go through Desiree Silva and Michael. C. Jones.

Normalcy

Janet Ahern and Jeremy Harvey

Jeremy introduced the presentation, noting that the Youth Bill of Rights, Prudent Parenting Standards and Normalcy weave a bit of a web. Foster parents are the functional caregiver for our kids and the Normalcy procedures give foster parents a sense of control. The Youth Bill of Rights was established with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board and gives the Department some discretion with the courts, expanding decision-making procedures for foster parents.

Jeremy and Janet conducted an interactive presentation, engaging the council and guests in discussing vignettes about the following stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities: birth parents, caseworker, foster family, youth and court.

Questions for Consideration:

- 1) Who does it affect?
- 2) What kinds of questions have to be answered before the child does it?
- 3) Who makes the decision?

For example: Can foster parents cut a child's hair? Considerations: Balancing cultural, religious and youth's preferences is the normal thing to do. Birth parents may object and keep it from happening. Birth parents have residual rights: religious, cultural, right to visits, and right to consent to adoption.

Comments:

- Do not sign for a passport. Youth need a court order and a Guardian signature for a passport. Youth need a court order for the passport and a court order to travel.
- Foster parents living in Illinois across the river from St. Louis may allow overnight visits in grandparents' home.
- If a foster parent has questions or concerns about something they are asked to sign, they should contact the caseworker or the State Guardian at 312-814-8600. Ask to speak to a consent supervisor.
- May foster parents approve their own occasional babysitters for evening/weekend babysitting? Yes. Regular daycare/childcare must be background checked.

Statewide Youth Advisory Board

Jordan Linson

Jordan noted that the SYAB is recognizing that youth are becoming homeless and the board is working on ways to address this issue. They are also addressing the use of restraints in residential placements. They are also working on Normalcy. SYAB members meet in regional board meetings, then they come together to address the issues. Jordan will share information received in the SWFCAC meeting with the SYAB.

CWAC

Rachel Hoyt and Mary Savage

Rachel reported that she participated in the last meeting via phone, noting that a lot of discussion surrounds the negative media reports resulting from child deaths, noting that the Director is taking it very seriously. It is not just a tragedy for the family, but also for the agency. High turnover in workers is concerning. The new Child & Family Team meeting format will not be expanded statewide. CWAC reviewed the Chapin Hall report, tallying results. In 2012 there was a major shift in criteria regarding Intact Families and sometimes families don't meet criteria for intact services or for removal. There seems to be ambiguity because intact services are voluntary.

We have the lowest removal rate in the US and hope for an increase in intact services. They are reorganizing how workers are supervised and supervisory trainings are being rolled out. They continue to work on the relationship between DCFS and private agencies. A two-day safety training for staff was rolled out, focusing on staff safety as well as the safety of children and families. It was noted that there is a disconnect between policy regarding removals and how DCP/DCFS fulfill their roles. DCP is in and out. Policy talks about engaging with families or transitioning them to long-term services. The need to recruit foster parents for specialized children is recognized, and there will be a recruitment effort.

IFAPA

Gladys Boyd and Arrelda Hall

Gladys and Arrelda met with Director Smith. They discussed hosting a conference for foster parents. (They gave a proposal to the previous director.) Gladys reported that Director Smith seemed interested and the Department will need to look at how many might be able to attend. IFAPA is recommending that foster parents might be responsible for paying for their own lodging. The purpose of the conference is to provide training and a time to network with other foster parents and their theme is Knowledge is Power. Conferences also give DCFS leadership the opportunity to share their vision with foster parents. They will meet again with the Director and Michelle Grove. The plan is to host a conference in August 2020. A question from the Director prompted a discussion of respite services for foster parents. Gladys explained that there is no clear definition of respite, noting that respite does not mean babysitting. She also spoke to him about the need for more Foster Parent Support Specialists. Gladys reported that there will be a 3-5% increase in board payment for traditional foster care. Arrelda noted the Director's concern that foster parents are turning in their licenses. He agreed to meet with IFAPA on a quarterly basis.

Policy/Legislation Committee

Ken Keefe/ Stephanie Tesreau

The Department is revising 402 to line up with new Family First federal law. While discussing the committee's recommendation, it was determined that the committee should table their recommendation until they double check Federal Family First standards before submitting recommendations to revise 402.

Training

Harriet Kersh

The Office of Education and Professional Development is working on creating training on developmental disabilities, autism, mental health and behavioral issues. The Training Committee's goal is to work their way up so that as training comes up they will have the opportunity to review it.

Respite

Gladys Boyd

Gladys will reconvene the Respite Committee and use information gathered through her recent meeting with the Director. Respite Committee reports will be added to the meeting agendas.

Regional Reports

Northern Region – During Stakeholder Reports, Diana Blackburn reported that Northern Region is regrouping and setting things up. Rebecca Thomas is the regional council co-chair. They are going to try to rotate meetings throughout the region. July 11 is scheduled for Rockford and they will skip August. September 12 will be in Joliet, October in Dekalb, and November in Aurora.

They currently offer morning and evening meetings and will evaluate to see what works. They are going to try to get a call-in number or WebEx, since distance seems to be a hindrance. They have three picnics scheduled for Foster Parent Appreciation.

Central Region – Ken was on a portion of the call on the 28th, they discussed the use of clothing/equipment voucher, updates from the sub regions and listed regional concerns. Previously the region had expressed concerns with unresolved Foster Parent Law grievances and need support with moving forward with the council to address these concerns.

Cook North – Kate needs to connect with the Cook North regional Council.

Cook Central – Arrelda requested that policy committee review and clarify the interpretation of the 14-day notice policy. Carol made the assignment.

Cook South – May was Foster Parent Appreciation Month and they held an appreciation dinner celebration for foster parents. They had a presentation from HealthWorks and Arrelda and Gladys did a presentation about a possible conference, determining that many are interested.

Cook Central – Cook Central combined with Cook North and Cook South to host the foster parent appreciation event with 160 foster parents and 20 staff working the event. The Director attended and participated fully throughout the evening. They had entertainment and Karaoke singers and awarded donated gift cards.

Southern – They held a conference call in April. Their council is growing. They discussed training, training is taking place throughout the region and they held regional foster parent appreciation events. The Director visited them. Audience member Courtney added during public comments that some parts of the region held appreciation dinners and other parts sent out small foster parent gifts. She also noted that during the regional call they have a lot of private agency foster parents call in. Licensing needs to be sure to do their work. Frequently asked questions include the following: Who are the FPSS? How do we get children in counseling? How do we get proper medical care? Why are these children in care? Other concerns include safety issues, i.e. how to install car seats, etc. The next call is July 23.

Carol discussed the need for a Permanency Committee. As the Department works through the PIP one of the goals the council wanted to address was achieving permanency. It was noted that council members are already serving on multiple committees and find it challenging to move forward at a solid pace. The Permanency Committee option was tabled and the council will consider this for the future.

Stakeholder Comment

- Barb Crandall stressed the importance of establishing a Permanency Committee. She stated that supportive training needs to be offered, i.e., What does a foster parent need to ask a caseworker? What should be on the agenda when a caseworker comes to a foster parent's home? She noted that this could be addressed by training, etc. She said that all should be considered part of the professional team.

Public Comment

Stevie Knoblauch reported concerns from foster parents in the Bloomington area support group:

- Clothing and Equipment Vouchers are hard to obtain and utilize. Foster parents must drive an hour or more to use clothing vouchers, if they obtain a voucher.
- Foster parents can't access day care and may not get coverage when they work more than 40 hour weeks. Unlicensed day care providers cannot get daycare payment any longer. Considering Normalcy, it should be better for a friend of the family known to the child to provide care and receive reimbursement.
- Adopted kids older than three years of age don't qualify for day care. Day care should be covered until children enter school.
- Car seat safety is a problem. Transporters and agency workers don't know how to correctly install and utilize car seats. This should be a training accessible to birth parents, foster parents and staff.
- Foster parents think that when you adopt a child in care under the age of one, they should still receive benefits including coverage of adoption expenses, medical card and stipend
- The Department should permit the use of donated breast milk for infants if the pediatrician approves the use.
- Respite care – the fact that the licensing worker must come and treat respite as a placement change causes huge gaps in the ability to obtain child care. Licensing workers are overworked and are not always able to accommodate and when they do there are foster parents that never get their checks.
- Funds are needed for summer camps and other extra-curricular activities.
- There is a gap between Early Intervention and Early Learning that could use some attention. With long wait lists and not all schools doing summer school and/or needing to qualify for summer school, it is hard to get services such as speech when a child comes into care. If kids come into care at almost age three, the chance of getting evaluated and set up with services is slim. If foster parents get a placement in the summer they end up going months without help due to school being months away. Ideally, if early intervention could go until 4 unless the child is enlisted in preschool or early learning that would be helpful.
- They need Spider to list places that accept vouchers, Food Banks, diaper distribution centers, etc.
- There are problems when transitioning between one caseworker and another.

Patrick Barberousse asked questions about council processes.

- Do subcommittees take up issues? What happens to action items? The council chair noted that the council sometimes hits roadblocks, but we work with various divisions to support our mission of impacting the provision of foster care.
- Where do the minutes go? Minutes are posted publicly on the DCFS external website, are distributed to council members and a summary of council meeting endeavors is submitted with the monthly report to the DCFS Director.
- Patrick suggest streaming the meeting.

MOTION: *Kate Monte made the motion to adjourn. Rachel Hoyt seconded and the meeting adjourned at 3:15pm.*

Next meeting: June 21, 2019, Sheraton Lisle Naperville, 3000 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois.

Potential Agenda Items

Day Care, including the approval process

Committees

Professionalism presentation

Invite Mary Beth Corrigan, DCFS early childhood specialist

Next Meeting: July 12, 2019 at the Thelma Keller Convention Center in Effingham, Illinois.