

**Joint Meeting of the
Statewide Foster Care & Illinois Adoption Advisory Councils
Wyndham Springfield City Centre, 700 East Adams, Springfield, Illinois
November 8, 2019
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

IAAC MEMBERS PRESENT	SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT	GUESTS	STAFF
Kathleen Bush	Gladys Boyd	Lamont Boswell	Janet Wukas Ahern
Keeley Giles	Kimberly Coniglio	Julie Cebulski	Julie Barbosa
Beth Hunter	Arrelda Hall	Christine Feldman	Geneva Byrd
Natalie Miller	Rachel Hoyt	Debbie Freke	Rae Colyer
Maripat Oliver	Harriet Kersh	Katie Friend	Jason Cummins
Elizabeth Richmond	Maya Maclin	Autymne Huerta	Barbara Crandall
Cara Siebert	Karolyn Needles-Hobbs	Vanessa James	Debra Dyer-Webster
Karen Taylor	Kellye Norris	Jeanna Radford	Carlene Erno
Danny Tolliver, Jr.	Mary Savage	Mark Tesreau	Gwenn Eyer
Amy Trotter	Carol Sheley	Pam Winsel	Jen Florent
Karen Wardlaw	Samella Taylor-Lewis		Sylvia Fonseca
Mark Werner	Stephanie Tesreau		Leonika "Nika" Garrett
Jeremy Wheeler			Michelle Grove
Julie Yelverton			Cynthia Richter-Jackson
IAAC MEMBERS ABSENT	SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT		Kelly King
Crystal Rekart	Katy Cotts		Marc Smith
Danielle Sanders	Ken Keefe		Susan Wilkins
Brittney Sprouse	Susan McConnell		Arlena Roach
Linda White	Kate Monte		

Welcome and Introductions

Carol Sheley

SWFCAC Chairperson Carol Sheley welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:14 a.m. and council members and guests introduced themselves.

Child Welfare in Illinois

Marc D. Smith, Acting Director

Director Smith reminded the councils that he had attended a SWFCAC meeting a year ago when his agency received one of the council's Foster Parent Law awards. He acknowledged the value of the work of the councils. He stated that as he has started in his new role it is important for him to be a leader in many areas, identifying priorities and setting goals. This is one of the biggest child welfare organizations in the world and we need to identify our roles and goals and lead the way. He said that it is his job to focus the media, legislature, etc. on what really meets the needs

of children and families. He said that sometimes public perception is that the work is just common sense, but in fact we need to focus on working with families at their worst to help them to be able to achieve their best. He said that we need to protect and nurture children and help build families in situations where parents were not necessarily protected and nurtured in the past. He was asked to formally present his vision, and after some research he determined that he didn't need a fancy 20-word statement. His vision statement is, "Safety is our business." He noted that it is not simplistic, it is direct. Everything we do from the inception of the case, to foster care, to case management, to IT, our work is focused on safety. They conduct Safety Enhancement training for all DCFS and POS workers and supervisors.

Resource development is critical. He said that as he goes around to offices to touch base with staff, he has been welcomed warmly, with the assurance that people are backing him and praying for him. He has asked what they need and they state that they need more foster parents. They indicate that they need to focus on building out what our support needs are and developing resources. Kids are still staying in offices overnight. They identify the issue and develop strategies to address it. We need to work on building more resources. Under the leadership of Debra Dyer-Webster, they are working on it. They need more shelter beds. Director Smith acknowledged that the state cannot just cycle from cutting resources then asking for resources and going back and forth. They need more staff. They have case managers and investigators that have too much work. He talked to the legislators when he got to the Department, noting that they appreciate the 75 new staff, but they need more. He said that a miraculous thing happened. They heard him and responded. We have a governor who supports our business. He said that one of the reasons Director Smith got the job is because he is absolutely not political. He stated that no one knew who he was on March 30th. Only those who worked with him in his agency knew him. He was not the president or CFO of the agency; he was the director of operations. The governor demonstrates amazing support for the Department. Director Smith noted that politicians often step to the side when working with the Department, but the governor has stepped up.

When Director Smith first came to the agency he immediately had to answer questions about a child death. While he was answering questions, the governor stepped up and started answering questions alongside him. When interviewing he was asked by the governor to categorize the 200 most vulnerable children and make a plan to meet their needs. His answer was when you think about saving those 200 you must focus on all 17000 kids. You must work on strategies for intact families and build resources. You must build supports in all those areas.

When Director Smith had been here six months he was asked what he had accomplished. They wanted serious numbers, i.e., how did you spend the new allotted money you'd been given? The Department had hired 200 more staff. We have access to 32 more shelter beds and approximately 30 additional residential beds. We cannot see these from the outside, but we have reduced our beyond medical necessity numbers; by the data, the length of stay is shorter. But that is not enough. They are pushing for more beds with more coming in six, 12 and 15 months. They sent letters to each agency CEO to request one bed now. The agencies see that as an opportunity to partner with the Department.

The primary way we build our resources is the primary way we support children who come into care. They developed a foster care recruitment plan. It is no longer acceptable for DCFS workers

to go into the private sector to demand more homes. The private sector is trying, and the Department developed a recruitment plan, put it into practice, and it didn't work. They are no longer willing to accept something that doesn't work. They went back to the table and refined the plan and will continue to do so. Communications stepped up and people that had ideas that they were not necessarily willing to express initially stepped up. The private sector helped them to write a new plan that will roll out in six months. Having more people around the table is critical.

Director said that the reason he was with the councils is that he wants them to understand his passion and commitment to children. There are times when the work is not done. We own that. We will learn from tragedy and shortcomings, holding people accountable. His first legislative hearing was spent listening to the lecture, taking the good and the bad. They said that when a worker makes a mistake you must hold the worker accountable. They said that if he did a good job he would be allowed to stay. If not, he would be out. They are going to hold everyone accountable. Director Smith is working to hold people accountable and empower them to do their jobs. If we do something that does not work, we need to take the time to do it better. He is asking for staff to provide their A-game. If they're not appropriate for/committed to certain work, they need to move to work that is a better fit. Every day we think about the work a little bit better. Every day we have one more employee. Every two days we have another bed. Every two days we have another emergency foster home. Every two days we have a child who goes into a foster home or is adopted. Every day a child safely goes home. Every day a worker thinks about safety a little differently than they did the day before. Director Smith acknowledged that he must build on the work of those who came before him, knowing that foster and adoptive parents that care about children and work so hard are the foundation. He knows what it is like to work in the private sector. He recognizes that both public and private sector staff require the same training and support.

Director Smith thanked the councils for inviting him and for caring for "our kids." He acknowledged that there are thousands who put it on the line every day, caring for kids that need us. He said that it is his honor and pleasure to serve children and families in Illinois. He noted that in speaking to legislators, the lead justice in the Supreme Court, and judges throughout the state, he realized that all recognize the importance of the work. He acknowledged the councils and said that all should be committed to doing our best work.

QIC Award Presentation

Cynthia Richter-Jackson

Cynthia began her presentation with a brief overview of the QIC-Ag grant. The Children's Bureau Administration for Children and Families established the national Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardian Support and Preservation. The QIC team is made up of Spaulding for Children in partnership with the University of Texas, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and University of Wisconsin. This group was designed to promote permanence when reunification is no longer a goal, and improve adoption and guardianship preservation and support.

Five years ago, Illinois applied for and was accepted as one of eight states and tribes participating in the grant. The project was designed to test promising evidence-based interventions and practices. Long-term outcomes were to increase post-permanency stability, improve behavioral health for children and improving child well-being. Illinois was allowed to

choose what they wanted to work on, in collaboration with private agencies, the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council, etc. Illinois chose to focus on post-adoptive youth between the ages of eleven and sixteen to offer interventions to the youth and their families. The intervention offered is called TARGET, Trauma Affect Regulation Guide for Evaluation and Therapy. It is a strength-based psycho-educational intervention for children affected by trauma. Partnering agencies included Metropolitan Family Services and Baby Fold. Outcomes with demonstrated success now have influence on current practice.

Cynthia acknowledged Christine Feldman and her contributions to the work. Cynthia presented the QIC award to Director Smith, noting that Illinois continues to care about children after adoption. The Director thanked the Adoption Advisory Council for their work that led to the award. He noted that he has received awards during his time as Director, indicating that they are based on the strong work of others within the Department. Christine noted that The Children's Bureau loves Illinois. She said that Illinois has the best adoption system nationally known.

Service Award Presentation

Mark Werner

Mark recognized Christine Feldman as this year's Adoption Month honoree. Christine was honored for many years of service to adoptive families and adoption professionals. Christine has spent the last five years leading the council in their work on the QIC-AG grant.

This grant has accomplished the development of the following:

- TARGET curriculum, an evidence-based curriculum that has assisted many families
- New Path Beyond Adoption website
- Post-Adoption Hotline
- Numerous training videos that will help sustain our work with supporting families

Prior to her work on the grant, Christine worked for DCFS in the statewide post-adoption unit. Mark noted that her work has helped children and families by providing additional resources, interventions, policy and practice and enhancing training that will help our adoptive parents and professionals in Illinois and through the United States.

Adoption Month Celebration

Elizabeth Richmond

Elizabeth acknowledged Karen Wardlaw's work on the Adoption Month celebration, noting that she was able to obtain outside funding for this year's celebration. This year's theme acknowledges various ways people are connected to adoption. She asked attendees to list their connections to adoption for the paper chains and distributed bracelets. She has extras for people who want to take them to their offices, support groups, etc. Jen Florent stated that the Department will post pictures that are shared, and suggested the hash tags to be used. She noted that this promotion has been picked up by media around the state.

Managed Care Organization

Debra Dyer-Webster

Debra stated that she is so excited to be here today to talk about Managed care, a step in assisting caregivers in obtaining healthcare services for children. Managed Care is an agreement between Healthcare and Family Services and IlliniCare to do all the medical and behavioral health services case management for youth in DCFS care who formerly had the medical card. All the services covered under the medical card will still be covered under IlliniCare, plus additional services that are approved through IlliniCare. The managed care portion for youth in care and adopted children is called YouthCare and it will roll out officially on February 1, 2020. The soft

roll-out began November 1st, with case managers contacting caseworkers, foster parents, etc. to gather information and let them know who they can talk to at IlliniCare. They really need caregivers to provide additional resources, i.e. providers youth already have a relationship with. Doctors do not have to join the complete network and may elect to serve only one youth, if necessary. Current providers are listed on the IlliniCare website. There is a FAQ section on the DCFS, HFS and IlliniCare websites. IlliniCare provides medical case managers, allowing caseworkers to focus on other areas.

Children who come into IlliniCare will be put into different groups determining the level of support that the medical case managers provide. Some children require more attention than others. YouthCare case managers will have a lower caseload, enabling them to assist in coordination of services. Ongoing assessments will be conducted and children may change care coordination from time to time. There has been a delay in the roll-out for adopted children and someone reported that a phone number that was shared in a previous meeting is not currently operable. Correct information is listed below.

Elizabeth stated that IAAC will set a time for a conference call in this regard. Pam Winsel from HFS said that for former youth in care, providers will receive a letter providing the links they need to make decisions and obtain care. Rachel Hoyt pointed out that there will be a 180-day period after the roll-out when providers will continue to be covered, even if they do not sign on with IlliniCare. Lamont Boswell stated that work is being done with providers added daily. They may not hit the database online right away, because there are several steps in adding providers to the system.

This coverage will not replace Healthworks. Healthworks has a contract with IlliniCare to continue to provide services for the first 180 days. Anika Todd and Debra Dyer-Webster will follow up on additional questions not covered in the lists. To ask IlliniCare YouthCare questions, call 844-289-2264. Caregivers may email provider names, etc. to: ILYouthCare@illinicare.com. Kelly King noted the importance of knowing the correct name used by providers in the IlliniCare system. Children who are medically fragile and technology-dependent will not move to IlliniCare at this time. Children covered under Interstate Compact will not transition to IlliniCare. Pam Winsel stated that when adoptive parents carry comprehensive insurance and choose to use their personal health insurance, the medical card will be secondary, but it will not be managed care.

Concern was expressed about foster parents receiving cold-calls requesting confidential information with no preparation regarding information sharing and their resistance to share confidential information. Debra acknowledged that the information did not go out in a check stuffer, so only staff received the information in advance. She will ensure that information is shared on various avenues and they will consider allowing IlliniCare staff to hold interviews in local DCFS offices to reassure caregivers about sharing information.

Director Smith noted the importance of having people that are totally dedicated to medical and behavioral health issues, getting to know the children and youth in real time and working to see that their needs are met. He said that these relationships will enhance the support that is needed.

State Guardian Report

Janet Ahern

Janet Ahern, the DCFS Guardianship Administrator, thanked the Director and Debra for their dedication to advocacy for children. She stated that they are making an adoption chain in her office and they are using it for a holiday centerpiece. She said that she learned a lot this week doing visits, including one child was going to undergo a biopsy, noting that she was reminded of the resilience of children.

The Office of the DCFS Guardian may be called when a MINOR youth in care has an issue in one of the following areas:

- Personal Injury cases
- Inheritances
- Criminal cases
- DCP Investigations
- School discipline
- Subpoenas
- Juvenile Delinquency Summons
- Name changes
- Identity Theft

This list is not meant to be exclusive, as there are many more issues that foster children and their foster parents face that are not covered by the Normalcy Act. This list covers primarily the legal issues MINOR youth in care may face. DCFS has a procedure in place, DCFS Procedure 327 that details the consent and legal issues handled by the Office of the DCFS Guardianship Administrator.

The general phone number in the Guardian's office, answered during regular business hours is (312) 814-8600. After-hours, the number to call is the CIRU Unit number (866)503-0184.

A council member asked about getting support for a youth from another state placed under Interstate Compact. It was noted that this concern should go to Julie Barbosa rather than to the Guardian's Office or the Adoption Unit. It was pointed out that collaboration between states is sometimes challenging and Illinois cannot control other states.

National Training Development and Curriculum Grant Update

Christine Feldman

NTDC stands for the National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster/Adoptive Parents which is a federal grant that is a 5-year cooperative agreement from the Administration on Children, Youth & Families. This grant will be used to develop and then evaluate a state-of-the-art training program to prepare foster and adoptive parents to effectively parent children exposed to trauma and to provide these families with ongoing skill development needed to understand and promote healthy child development.

Illinois has been selected to be one of the 8 sites to participate in this grant. The grant was awarded in October 2017 to Spaulding for Children, in partnership with Dr. Bruce Perry and the Child Trauma Academy (CTA); The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.); the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC); National Council for Adoption

(NCFA); and the University of Washington (UW). At the end of the grant period, Illinois will have access to a free, comprehensive curriculum that has been thoroughly evaluated, which can be used to prepare, train, and develop foster and adoptive parents.

The National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster/Adoptive Parents (NTDC) is being designed for families who are fostering and/or adopting children through the public child welfare system as well as those adopting through an intercountry or private domestic process. The NTDC curriculum will be comprised of three components:

Self-Assessment: Parents will complete an assessment before, during, and after the classroom-based training. Information gained from the initial assessment will help the trainer tailor the classroom-based material to the specific needs of the group participants. The second and third assessments are designed to help parents better understand their capacity, progress, and specific areas in which they might need to seek additional learning opportunities.

Classroom-Based Training: This dynamic and interactive curriculum will provide concrete information on the roles and responsibilities of foster/adoptive parents and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to effectively parent children who have experienced trauma. Each module will have clearly delineated learning objectives that not only build on skills taught in previous lessons but also align with competencies identified as common characteristics of successful foster and adoptive parents.

Right-time Training Participants will be able to guide their own continued learning and obtain information at the time they need it through ongoing access to training and resources. Video and written materials will be available through an app or Web-based platform, making resources easily available for parents to continue building their skills over time as their children transition through different developmental stages.

In Illinois, the curriculum will be piloted in the Northern Region and in Cook Central, and the comparison area is the Central Region. The Train the Trainers will take place at the end of February 2020, and the NTDC curriculum will be offered in the Northern Region and Cook Central beginning in April 2020. We have the opportunity to participate actively in the evaluation and to provide feedback on the curriculum. We will need 70 families to complete the NTDC training and participate in surveys for the evaluation in the Northern Region and Cook Central and 70 families to participate in surveys for the evaluation in the Central Region. We will end up with a free comprehensive, state of the art pre-service training that has been created for our use here in Illinois. The final curriculum will be disseminated across the United States in 2022.

SWFCAC Breakout – In the afternoon the SWFCAC and IAAC met separately.

Approval of October 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Council

Gladys Boyd made the motion to approve the October 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes. Maya Maclin seconded and the motion carried.

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.

Council Binders**Gwenn Eyer**

Gwenn distributed council member binders and discussed the contents. She reviewed forms and procedures, stressing professionalism. She noted that prompt responses are needed when meeting announcements and other requests go out.

Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Training**Gwenn Eyer**

Gwenn Eyer conducted the annual scoring training/refreshers. She stated that plans will be distributed electronically and in print, as needed. Council members are required to score plans in their role on the council. New members are requested to score a minimum of one plan with staff for one-on-one training. All council members should complete and submit a conflict of interest form which will be used to guide the distribution. All plan scores are due by January 31, 2020.

CWAC LGBTQI Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee**Michelle Grove**

Michelle stated that the focus of the subcommittee is to address issues faced by the LGBTQI community. She noted that they have requested foster parent involvement. Please contact Michelle to volunteer to serve on this committee. LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro is the key contact for this committee.

Committee Goals/ Outcomes/ Recommendations**Council**

In the absence of the SWFCAC Chair, Rachel Hoyt, Vice Chair, led the council in a discussion of SWFCAC committees. She distributed and went over committee descriptions. Gladys Boyd, current committee chair, recommended that the Respite Committee should be removed from the list. It was noted that there needs to be equal representation on the committees. A council member stated that committee involvement gives foster parents a chance to voice what they need. They can advocate through participation on committees to impact policies. Everyone needs to work together to get things passed, because when they do not the council cannot move forward in passing laws or changing policies.

Committee sign-up sheets will be used to sign up for committees. Council members need to focus on one or two committees and give the time to actively participate. They should serve on no more than three committees. Council members were encouraged to select one committee to really focus on serving. Committee chairs are needed. Staff will continue to support the development of a revised committee list.

Committee Reports:

CWAC – No meeting was held. CWAC will meet next week.

IFAPA – Arrelida Hall reported that approximately 35 foster parents got together because the Director wanted to speak to them. He spoke with them about recruitment and retention.

Regional Reports

Northern Region – Kimberly Coniglio reported that they discussed concern that Northwestern Hospital is excluded with IlliniCare. The region still expresses concern with Helping Home transportation.

Central Region – No council members were present to report.

Cook North – Kate Monte submitted her report in advance of the meeting due to her inability to attend. The next Cook North Foster/Adoptive Parent Meeting will be held Tuesday, November 12, 2019. The guest speaker will be Donnis Briscoe, DCFS Education Advisor. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 1911 South Indiana, 10th floor, from 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Anyone who is unable to attend the meeting can participate by utilizing the call-in number: Phone: 1-888-494-4032 Passcode: 2300372707#

Kate reported that there is a monthly support group for foster adoptive parents parenting kids with FASD held from 1:30-3:00 p.m. at the Downers Grove Public Library on the 2nd Saturday of the month. Foster parents who attend are gauging interest in starting another on the north side of the city. There are several Facebook groups involved in this conversation. A small group of Northside parents meet monthly for a potluck and a local trauma mom's group also has regular meetings. Kate will update the council as she receives more specific information. Last summer a group of foster families in Cook North coordinated a camping trip to Starved Rock State Park. They are discussing starting a men's support group, and they are working on confirming interest. Although her region is in Cook County, some parents participate in the DuPage Foster Parent Support Group at Wheaton College and the monthly Love Moves Us group in Oak Brook. There is hope that someone will develop a Chicago Love Moves Us group. Kate is working to provide connections with the SWFCAC to support the work of these groups.

Cook Central – Arrelida Hall reported that they held a Lifebook Party on October 30 with more than 70 in attendance, including both foster and adoptive families. Their Christmas Party is scheduled for December 14th.

Cook South – Kellye Norris reported that they held a lengthy meeting. Rob Molberg from Licensing was the speaker, discussing two new additions to the program.

Southern – Mary Savage reported that a short call was held with Darrel Johnson discussing Family First. 45 cases are to be closed. They will celebrate and promote Adoption Month throughout the region with judges, police officers, face painting, ID cards, advocacy and T-shirts.

Michelle will solicit recommendations to fill council vacancies.

Stakeholder Comments

None

Public Comments

It was noted that meeting schedules have been set.

MOTION: *Maya Maclin made the motion to adjourn. Rachel Hoyt seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.*

Next Meeting: January 17, 2020, at the Thelma Keller Convention Center, 1202 N. Keller Dr. Effingham, Illinois.

Potential Agenda Items:

Managed Care

Family First

Doug Washington and Jose Oropezza for transporter contracts

Edie Wood from the Contracts Unit to address respite