

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
July 24th, 2020
Webex
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Webex Conference
Call in number: 415-655-0002
Meeting number (access code): 807 221 503

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions Ken Keefe

This special meeting has been called to address issues and concerns regarding the 2020-21 return to school and the availability and the appropriate reimbursement of daycare for foster parents and caregivers due to COVID-19 restrictions and protocols. The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will provide recommendations regarding these issues and concerns to DCFS administration.

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Chair Ken Keefe. After a brief welcome and introduction, the two reasons for the meeting were discussed which included compiling a list of stakeholder questions and composing a list of recommendations to address the daycare issues around the start of the school year in the face of COVID-19 restrictions. The chair opened the discussion to the floor:

Jessica Bullard: indicated that some agencies are conducting after school programs and are conducting and addressing school curriculum activities in small group session during the school day when remote learning is implemented by schools. Foster parents are requesting reimbursement for these situations. Additionally, if foster parents are choosing not to send their foster children to in-person learning setting but sending to a smaller off site setting that is teaching the same curriculum that public schools are doing will there be reimbursement for this? It was recommended that this question be proposed to Doug Washington: **Can we get reimbursed for private programs that supervise children as they utilize online public school services in a small in-person setting?**

An additional question was also raised after discussion of using individuals under the age of eighteen to help supervise foster children in the home. It was then suggested an addition question be sent for Doug Washington in that: **Can individuals get funding for babysitting services provided by individuals under 18 (during the summer)?**

Rebecca Thomas and Carol Sheley both raised questions and issues of daycare reimbursement for daycare for children over the age of twelve if school goes to offsite e-learning. Additionally, the reimbursement rate for unlicensed and relative caregivers that are providing daycare services for foster children is woefully inadequate and extremely minimal. Chair Keefe indicated that a formal request will be made to the to: **Significantly increase the unlicensed caregiver rate**

(including for under-18 caregivers) to support foster parents struggles to find caregivers during the pandemic.

Jimmie Golden raised the issue of some schools providing e-learning are the tools, such as chrome books, to use the technology be provided by the department if foster parents do not have the means to obtain these tools?

Samella Taylor-Lewis also inquired if Chicago Public Schools have come out with a plan for the upcoming school year. There were no answers to this question. Additionally, the lack of internet access and possible solutions to address this was briefly discussed. A formal request was made that: **If foster youth are attending schools remotely (online) and schools are not providing devices, provide necessary technology devices to foster children so that they can effectively participate in remote learning.**

Daycare availability was discussed and again raising the rate for unlicensed caregivers and under the age 18. Carol Sheley also indicated that daycares have been shut down. Foster parents using these daycares were forced to find a different daycare. Foster parents had to complete a new application despite having an open subsidy and daycare application. Why is there a need to complete the entire application? Can there be a shorten form if there is an active daycare application? A formal request was made: **If a foster parent has an active daycare subsidy in place, allow them to change providers without restarting the daycare approval process.**

Chair Keefe addressed the next agenda item of daycare payments. Harriet Kersh questioned what happens to individuals whose foster children attends a daycare and there is a mandatory quarantine for the children in that daycare regardless of where the children are positive? What reimbursement or supplement can be provided to the foster parent to help offset this cost. Stephanie Tesreau also added that this situation should also apply to foster children attending school and are requested to quarantine. The formal request was made that: **Provide foster parents with additional financial support when students are suddenly at home due to COVID-19 exposure or infection and parents must leave work to support them at home.**

Jesse Rodriguez-Hammond indicated some of the Y's and other agencies are offering a place for children to come and obtain help with school work. Foster parents are being told that is not an option because they are not licensed to provide education. If this is the case and not being able to send a foster child to these programs because it is not a school but are using the same curriculum as the school does not seem correct.

Chair Keefe indicated the next steps for the councils is putting these questions and requests into a formal letter for review and then sending the letter to the appropriate Department administration.

The motion was made by Ken Keefe to submit the requests to the appropriate stakeholders and provide the feedback via email to the council. The motion was seconded by Stephanie Tesreau. The motion passed unanimously. Roll call vote

There were no public comments.

There were no additional stakeholder comments.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Ken Keefe. The motion was seconded by Kellye Norris-second. Passed unanimously. Role call vote:

The meeting was adjourned 10:01 a.m.

Next Meeting: September 11, 2020, 9:00 a.m. via Webex