
Illinois Children and Family Services Advisory Council

January 13, 2022 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM

Via WebEx / Conference line only

MINUTES

Attendance

Members: Marge Berglind, Anita Weinberg, Nate Pietrini, Jennifer Hansen, Brittani Kindle, Gabriel Foley, Kim King

DCFS: Kara Hamilton, Lori Welcher-Evans, Shirley Davis-Barsh, Kim Mann, Tahney Fletcher

Public: Nicholas Martin (pending member), Melissa Staas, Joshua Travis (pending member), D'Laney Gielow

Agenda

I. Welcome and Introductions

Marge called meeting to order 3:04pm.

- **Discussion of DCFS in the news:** DCFS under pressure with cases in the news, Director in court, caseworker being killed. Anita brought up two caseworkers killed in past 4 years leading to legislation enhancing penalties for those who harm worker, but points out enhanced penalties for those who harm a worker do not statistically work. Nate Pietrini agreed and suggested the group be proactive in regards to this. Also, would like to hear Director Smith's plan on bed shortage.

II. Approval of Minutes from November 18 meeting- Jennifer Hansen noted last name spelling incorrect in one spot, Kara changed. **MOTION: On a motion by Jennifer Hansen moved seconded by Brittani Kindle, updated minutes were unanimously approved.**

III. Report of Nominating Committee: Jennifer Hansen

- **Report by Jen (incoming Chair):** Three slots suggested by Nominating Committee; Jen from Vice Chair to Chair, Brittani from Secretary to Vice Chair and Gabe Foley to Secretary. **MOTION: Marge motioned to accept slate, Anita seconded. No objections, slate approved.**

IV. Discussion Item: Family First Implementation Plan

- **Marge Overview:** Marge overviewed Family First, federal legislation pending for a long time. Purpose is to strengthen families by providing evidence-based prevention services to keep kids out of foster care and reduce inappropriate use of group home (residential) placements. Marge discussed funding of DCFS, how the Department receives federal funding.

V. DCFS Presentation: Dr. Kim Mann and Lori Welcher-Evans

- **Presentation of Key Elements**

- i. Why Family First? Promotes strengths- resources/supports, address identified needs- comprehensively/ecologically.
- ii. Funding of Family First
- iii. Prevention services, evidence based
- iv. Intact services-
 1. Engaging children/families, specifically fathers
 2. Involving parents & kids in their case planning; surveys sent out to parents for parent-children meeting
 3. Culturally responsive services
- v. Home visiting
 1. Pregnant and parenting youth
 2. Support throughout pregnancy and parenthood
 3. Prenatal engagement work

- **Overview of Steering/Evaluation Process**

- i. Target populations
- ii. As of December, 975 youth involved in services since October 2020
- iii. Trained 175, 279 to be trained and have 2 contractors motivational interviewing.
- iv. 4 Family First full time staff and 4 for home visiting
- v. Lots of work being done around continuous quality improvement

- **Committee Questions/Concerns**

Q. How is it determined what services a family needs?

A. Dr. Mann: start with adolescence needs and strength assessment- algorithm (decision support tool) flag resources needed. Worker gets a prompt about resource, IT support is critical. Staff then meet and walk through info, then IT helps with referrals through portal.

Q. At what stage does the above process happen? Hotline, court, etc.?

A. Dr. Mann: post-hotline, once a family has agreed to accept help. Some are indicated some are unfounded cases.

Q. In reference to parent surveys, are those same questions being asked to the youth?

A. Dr. Mann: unsure on specifics, will have to get back on that.

Q. How intact services model through family first different from model prior to 2020?

A. Dr. Mann: Family First has new interventions, new trainings, new collaborations with sister agencies. Once intact completes motivational interview training, then working in SACWIS completing CANS once in prevention plan, they must complete every element of CANS (identifies what is needed for a family) links directly to prevention plan where services identified. All work being evaluated independently by ~50,000 people.

Q. Needs-based services are a real concrete need, is there a plan to incorporate those more formally?

A. Dr. Mann: not pulling stuff under DCFS that are house in other agencies- DHS for example. Integration is key for these areas.

Q. Are some families involved in court cases?

A. Dr. Mann: Sometimes there are issues working with other state agencies and gets tough during court cases, judges like to order DCFS to do everything. Caseworker prep going forward? Per Lori, Yes, some are. Better trainings and understanding for court personnel and judges as well as Family First training.

Q. Funding for Family First? Are Norman funds still available?

A. Lori Welcher-Evans: Yes, Norman funds are still available for families. Someone else will have to come discuss funding.

- **Identify Committee Next Steps**

- i. Funding questions, would like someone from DCFS to come to March meeting. Interested in the QRTP piece as well (Angela Hassell).

VI. Discussion Item: Follow up on COVID Concerns

- No update from questions raised in November meeting

Q. Has Omicron changed anything in regards to direction DCFS is going?

VII. Discussion Item: Identify Agenda Items for March Meeting

- COVID Questions addressed
- Youth Care statistics (Gabe)
- Family First Funding

Meeting Adjourned

MOTION: On a motion by Jennifer Hansen and seconded by Brittani Kindle, the council unanimously agreed to adjourn.

Meeting ended 4:52 PM