

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
April 1, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Northfield Inn & Suites, 3280 Northfield Dr, Springfield
MINUTES

IAAC Members Present	IAAC Members Absent	DCFS Staff Present
Karla Blake	Clemmie Banks	Chris Boyster
Karen Faber	Kathleen Bush	Laura Coffey
Laura Grimes	Tiffany Desroches	Tony Correa
Jeanette Kurth	Laura Dillard	Debra Dyer-Webster
Holly Loy	Heather Feltman	Jenny Florent
Michelle Price	Kelly Green	Vanessa James
Elizabeth Richmond	Kristie Kunstman-Stern	Kelly King
Dawn Saphir	Ashley Lapse	Terry McGlothlin
Krista Teckenbrock	Mark Werner	Pamela Mills
Danny Tolliver		Stacey Simek-Dreher
Karen Wardlaw		
Julie Yelverton		Guests
		Gwenn Eyer
		Robyn Harvey
		Joyce Loy
		Karen Taylor

Welcome & Introductions –Elizabeth Richmond, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Approval of Minutes from February 5, 2016, IAAC Meeting

Karen Faber made the motion to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2016 IAAC conference call. Jeanette Kurth seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

PRESENTATIONS

Update from the Statewide Adoption Administrator – Pam Mills

QIC-AG Grant

Pam stated that we are on target with the QIC-AG study, implementing a trauma-focused intervention starting in August 2016. This is for youth ages 12-14 with a finalized adoption or guardianship. We are in the second year of the grant. Central Region and Cook will be used for the pilot. Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET) uses a strength-based psycho-educational approach to education and therapy for youth who have been affected by trauma. The full model includes seven essential core skills, called the FREEDOM Steps:

- Focus
- Recognize triggers
- Emotion self-check
- Evaluate thoughts
- Define goals
- Options
- Make a Contribution

For the QIC project, adoptive and guardianship caregivers will be encouraged to participate in TARGET sessions with the youth. Long term outcomes include increased post-permanency

stability, improved child and family well-being and improved behavioral health for children and youth. Pam distributed a handout with the basic information.

Illinois has been approved for another five-year program, a pilot to train foster parents and our providers on how to identify kids with mental health needs, how to identify triggers, and how to meet their needs. At the end of the five years we'll have a database on the DNet where foster parents can access training. Pam and Dianne Cottrell will have the lead on this work.

Pam reported that we have preliminary approval on the check stuffer flyers that should go out in June and December. These flyers provide information re: services available to adoption and guardianship parents. This will include contact numbers for each region. Pam will send a copy to the council for review. Debra asked that they include the DCFS scholarship information/deadline in at least the December version.

Kelly King reported that she finally got the statewide conference up and going. It will be held on April 15th. They are having it at Baby Fold in Normal. It will serve about 85 people. Julie Yelverton will attend to represent the Adoption Advisory Council. Michelle Price will be her back up.

Pam said that we finally have coverage for preservation services for the Kankakee area. We've expanded the JCFS contract with many LCSW's providing clinical support.

This is the end of the fiscal year, so many are trying to get adoptions finalized by June 30th. They have two new supervisors in the Central Unit. Tracy Vinson is the new supervisor in Springfield. The new supervisor in Champaign will be Robbie Gerhardt, starting May 1st. There is a lot of transitioning with so many new workers.

Concern was expressed about adoption preservation services in the Peoria area. The major concern is that therapists are not demonstrating success over time with our adoptive families. Kellie noted that they've been doing some reorganization and she will be visiting them next week. Laura Grimes said that she would help try to identify additional therapists in the area.

Update from Guardian's Office - Debra Dyer-Webster

We are starting a pilot for Therapeutic Foster Homes so that we can take children out of residential care and put them in a community setting. There's an RFP out there for an agency to develop foster homes for children stepping down and hopefully to prevent youth from entering residential.

Debra reported on the Specific Recommendations from the BH Panel:

- 1. Institute a children's system of care demonstration program that permits POS agencies and DCFS sub-regions to waive selected policy and funding restrictions on a trial basis in order to reduce the use of residential treatment and help children and youth succeed in living in the least restrictive, most family-like setting. We need to develop additional Therapeutic foster homes and work on placing children in families.*
- 2. Engage Department offices in a staged "immersion" process of retraining and coaching front-line staff in a cohesive model of practice that provides children and their families with access to a comprehensive array of services including intensive home-based services, designed to enable children to live with their families. A pilot will be starting in two regions, and will then roll out across the entire state.*
- 3. Fund a set of permanency planning initiatives to improve permanency outcomes for adolescents to enter state custody at age 12 or older either by transitioning youth to permanent homes or preparing them for reconnecting to their birth families reaching adulthood. We'll extend*

guardianship subsidies to children over 12. We added to the definition of what's considered family and to the definition of fictive kin. We are waiting on pending legislation to extend the guardianship subsidies.

4. *Retain an organizational consultant to aid the Department in "rebooting" a number of stalled initiatives that are intended to address the needs of children and youth with psychological behavioral or emotional challenges.* The Strategic Planning Unit will be responsible for this, making sure that we implement initiatives and follow up on outcomes.

5. *Restore funding for the Illinois Survey of Child and Adolescent Wellbeing that uses standardized instruments and assessment scales modeled after the national Survey of Child and Adolescent Wellbeing to monitor and evaluate changes in the safety, permanence and wellbeing of children for a representative sample of DCFS-involved children and their caregivers.* Everything we do, we're looking at outcomes. Every initiative, every contract, every provider, etc. will have specific outcomes that have to be met, or there will be penalties.

6. *The implementation plan will provide for the Department to contract with an external partner to perform an effective residential and group-home monitoring program. The Department shall use an external partner for that function until such time as the department has sufficient staff with the necessary experience and clinical expertise to perform the function internally and further has developed an in-house program that can monitor residential and group-home placements effectively.* We have contracted with UIC and Northwestern to be our outside partners monitoring residential programs. Based on their recommendations we'll hire staff.

**More information may be found on DNet or on the DCFS web page.

Discussion:

- The Immersion pilot location will be determined based on the right mix of children in need, services available, and existing providers.
- *Is there any way to extend therapeutic parenting training to adoptive parents?* Once we have the foster parent training completed, we can offer a web based training.
- Debra met yesterday with First Star, a national organization that partners local universities with the state's child welfare program to work with 8th grade students to pre-identify a college, following them through high school and ensuring that they get accepted to a university. We're going to start that with Loyola in Chicago and we're trying to identify a university outside Chicago, as well, looking at University of Illinois and Illinois State University. Each program can take 20 – 30 students. Students spend two weeks during the summer on the campus, attend monthly meetings, have a Christmas reunion, receive educational coaching with people advocating for the student, and they get assistance with tutoring, etc. Adopted youth will not be covered, because to qualify, the youth must have an open case.
- *Does DCFS provide educational advocacy services for adoptees?* Pam Mills stated that we really do not, and recommended the Center for Law and Social Work for educational advocacy for adopted children in Cook and surrounding areas. Their contact number is 773/728-7800. Debra noted that there is a recent federal law that mandates states to appoint a liaison for children involved with the state's child welfare department on their State Board of Education. We are still waiting for ISBE to identify the Educational Consultant. Debra is following up on this and will share information once the person is identified. Vanessa will put a statement in the newsletter that all foster parent training, including educational advocacy, is available to DCFS adoptive families, as well.

Debra shared a paid internship opportunity for youth in Chicago.

*“Looking for a *paid internship* this summer? [Black on Both Sides](#) is looking for passionate, motivated, and energized youth who are currently or were formerly involved in the foster care system to join our third leadership cohort! The internship takes place in Chicago, Illinois. Find out more at one of our upcoming Info Sessions: April 7th and 9th, 6pm to 7:30pm, 602 S. 61st Street, in Chicago. Ready to sign up? Click here to complete this [fast application](#) & we’ll contact you about the internship! If you have questions or would like to talk it through with someone, please reach out to us at blackonbothsides2013@gmail.com.”*

Legislative Update – Chris Boyster, Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs

Chris introduced himself to the council. He began his report by stating that the Attorney General says that a state employee should not continue to be paid because there’s not an appropriation line. He believes that due to a consent decree pay would be mandated. On the other hand, there are agencies that are not covered under the consent decree, but the Governor has tried to assure us that they will be paid, as well. Governor Rauner has given his full support to DCFS to work on reforms and programs to really build and develop the Department.

DCFS has very important pending legislative initiatives:

- *Bill 3041 The Normalcy Legislation* –Director Sheldon realizes that our youth in care really deserve to have the quality of life comparable to those of youth who are not in care. We need to empower our parents to make reasonable and normal decisions for their foster children. We need to stop referring to our children as “wards.” They are “youth” and “young adults.”
- *Fictive Kin Legislation* – 2371 – This bill expands the definition of “Fictive Kin.” If someone has had a familiar type of relationship with the child we need to allow those people to be considered family. They’re working on legislation to allow foster parents of six to nine months to be considered fictive kin for subsidized guardianship purposes.

There are two bills in the Adoption Reform Committee next week:

- 4590 – The Adoption Act will keep a record of how the adoptive parents were identified and whether any attempts were made to maintain an open adoption. It allows the adoptive parents to know why they were chosen, etc. The bill will not directly impact Department operations. The only change would be to document conversations that informed the prospective adoptive parents on how they were identified.
- Senator Feigenholz is sponsoring a bill stating that if you have the intention to adopt only, through a POS agency, you do not have to get a foster care license. This will expedite adoptions.
- Another bill they’re looking at would allow a waiver process for certain bars to licensure.
- There is a bill in the House that will require every school district in Illinois to have a liaison to work with foster parents.
- Director Sheldon believes that by the time a child is 21 and is not in a work or educational setting, the relationship with the Department needs to end. They are evaluating the possibility of the youth entering into a volunteer placement where they can still get services from the Department.
- There is a pending bill that would prevent DCFS from opening a child abuse/neglect case against a family visiting from another state.
- Fictive Kin concern should be expressed to SWFCAC re: maintaining licenses while working toward fictive kin placement.

May 4th former kids in care are holding a lobby day at the Capitol. They are shadowing legislators, meeting with Governor Sheldon, etc.

To contact Chris: 217/785-2504; Chris.Boyster@illinois.gov

Advocacy Office – Laura Coffey

Laura has been in the Advocacy Office for 16 years. She distributed Administrative Procedure 21. The Advocacy Office for Children and Families was established within the Director's Office to receive and respond to concerns presented to DCFS regarding the child welfare system in Illinois. They hear those concerns and work to connect people with available resources. They currently have nine staff. Laura noted that they've had a lot of changes over the years. Rod Remolina is the Chief and he's been very actively involved in the work. They utilize a statewide toll-free number: 1-800-232-3798. They don't handle calls that don't apply to DCFS or POS agencies. They don't deal with child support or court processes. The Advocacy Office follows the Department's confidentiality policies. The office has access to records. They try to make contact with people very quickly when they call in, often in fewer than two days. They try to complete cases within 30 days, but if not, they call to update every 30 days. They keep records for three years. They use APT monitors to work with private agencies and if something is really egregious they contact the Office of the Inspector General. There is a Youth Hotline number and a new youth-specific brochure is to be published by June. They cannot recommend specific adoption attorneys but an adoption attorney list is posted on the DCFS web site.

Medicaid vs. Private Insurance – Karen Moredock

Regular medical cards are part of the managed care system, but DCFS children are not covered this way at this time. Eventually our youth will go into some sort of managed care. They're currently looking at a plan from another state. It looks like it probably is going to happen, but it will be far in the future. They really don't have any plan in place at this time. Caregivers should determine whether to use the medical card vs. private insurance. You never lose your medical card, even if you insure your adopted child on your private insurance. If you chose to cover your child on your insurance, Medicaid will kick in as secondary, but will only cover what your private insurance didn't cover, up to the Medicaid rate. If you have private insurance, you must bill it first. The Department cannot pay co-pays. Kristie Herman is Karen's contact and she is willing to a future meeting. Donna Lindemulder is the new Administrator for Health Services.

Policy Update – Brad Mansfield, Tony Correa, Stacey Simek-Dreher

There are several policies out for review. Stacy is new to the Office of Child and Family Policy. She was just assigned to work on Rule 402 a couple of weeks ago. Comments are open until April 4th. It was extended due to requests for more time. There will be extensive changes. Elizabeth said it would be helpful to have foster parents on that committee so they would feel more included, and that when things clearly affect adoptive families, members of the Adoption Advisory Council should be included on the front end. Elizabeth asked how these changes fit with the Director's mission of Normalcy and Prudent Parenting. Has the Director's vision been shared with staff? Brad said a lot of the drafting was done before the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard and it needs to be revisited. Brad will run that by the Deputy.

Stacy said they will go through the suggestions with Jay Crome and Dan Finney. Next it goes to first notice for comments.

Debra said she will look into getting someone from the council on the committee.

Rule 383, Licensing Enforcement, just went out for comment. Comments are due April 13th.

Rule 309 - Adoption Services, is being updated

Rule 333 – Inter-Country Adoptions, is being repealed. If placement blows the placing agency is to be in charge of that kid. SCR must track any blown inter-country adoptions.

Tony said that if agencies are being vindictive or retaliatory, the OIG can take those reports. You have a right to contact anyone you feel you need to contact to advocate for a child in your care or regarding your services as a caregiver.

The process for changing rule is: First notice, comment period, comments go to same workgroup; second notice, hearing with JCAR, anyone can attend but cannot speak. First notice we are in ex parte communications. JCAR gets a summary of all comments that come from first notice. JCAR staff and members are allowed to see the summary. We can communicate to JCAR after 1st notice. There is a direct link to JCAR. Write to them after 2nd notice. Also has to be approved by the Governor's Office.

When it comes to first notice a petition might be more helpful.

There is a compilation of policy announcements on DNET monthly under the Policy link.

Committee Reports:

Membership – Karen Faber

Karen welcomed three new members present today - Karen Wardlaw, Krista Teckenbrock and Laura Grimes.

Training – Jeanette Kurth

Adoption certification training is now an interactive training and hasn't been rolled out yet. It will hopefully be available this summer. PRIDE is still stuck. For FY17 we are doing the training schedules with the old curriculum.

Adoption Celebration – Jeanette Kurth

The Peoria courts might do something. Cook County court will have a celebration. Elizabeth asked if we could get a package of information from Communications. Communications could help with photo release consents, press releases, and put together a media kit. National Adoption Day is the Saturday before Thanksgiving. They did it on a Thursday in Cook. Peoria does all adoptions on Friday. Pam's staff, Resource Recruiter staff and Permanency Achievement staff have been discussing an event, looking at Peoria, Champaign, DuPage, and somewhere in southern region. Elizabeth asked Vanessa and Jenny if we could have more info by the June meeting.

Elizabeth shared an article by Mark Werner entitled "Pilot Program Giving Dual Status Youth the Trauma-Informed Care, Connections They Need". Mark is currently in Boston to present at a conference on this topic.

Adjourn - Karen Faber made a motion to adjourn. Karen Wardlaw seconded.

Next Meeting Date:

Friday, June 3, 2016 – Baby Fold, Normal