

**Joint Meeting
 Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
 Illinois Adoption Advisory Council
 November 13, 2015
 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
 Sheraton Lisle, 3000 Warrenville Road, Lisle
 APPROVED MINUTES**

SWFCAC Members Present	IAAC Members Present	DCFS Staff Present
Barlow, Pauline	Banks, Clemmie	Arnold, Marilyn
Boyd, Gladys	Blake, Karla	Byrd, Geneva
Carbonaro, Hope	Bush, Kathleen	Colyer, Jacqui
Cruz, Edith	Desroches, Tiffany	Cox, Denise
Dixon, Irma	Dillard, Laura	Dyer-Webster, Debra
Dreska, Cheryl	Faber, Karen	Erno, Carlene
Gregory, Donna	Feltman, Heather	Eyer, Gwenn
Hannon, Gordon	Green, Kelly	Grutza, Jody
Holt, Darrin	Kunstman-Stern, Kristie	Harvey, Jeremy
Hoyt, Rachel	Kurth, Jeanette	Hughes, Theresa
Jones, Stephanie	Lepse, Ashley	James, Vanessa
Kalas, Kurt	Price, Michelle	Krause, Charles
McCoy, Cathy	Richmond, Elizabeth	Marett, Jennifer
McDaniel, Mark	Yelverton, Julie	McGlothlin, Terry
Olson, Sarah		Resa, Veronica
Sheley, Carol	IAAC Members Absent	Sheldon, George
Simpson, Michael	Bloom-Ellis, Brice	Taylor, Karen
Webb, Pamela	Grimes, Laura	
	Loy, Holly	Guests
SWFCAC Members Absent	Saphir, Dawn	Harvey, Robyn, FP
Burris, Charlene	Wardlaw, Karen	Holley, Alicia, FP
Fargher, Kelly	Werner, Mark	Krause, Charles, NWU
Norris, Kellye		Nelson, Kelsey, LSSI
		Nowicki, Lakeisha, FP
		Pacifici, Biana, LSSI
		Ruggero, Linda, FP
		Vassos, Dana, FP

Welcome & Introductions – Sarah Olson, SWFCAC Chair / Elizabeth Richmond, IAAC Chair called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Final SWFCAC Reports to Director – Sarah Olson
 There were no final reports to the Director. The monthly report to the Director from the SWFCAC Chair was emailed to SWFCAC members.

Approval of Minutes from October 16, 2015 SWFCAC Meeting
Gladys Boyd made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2015 SWFCAC meeting. Mike Simpson seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

Approval of Minutes from October 2, 2015 IAAC Conference call – IAAC

Jeanette Kurth made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2015 IAAC conference call. Karen Faber seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

PRESENTATIONS

Update from Guardian's Office - Debra Dyer-Webster

The Department has been involved in Rapid Response since February, looking at three areas including Data and Technology, Safety and Supervision in the Workforce, and Residential issues. In Phase 1 management was divided into three groups to gather information about these three areas and make recommendations for improvement. Surveys were distributed and meetings were held with stakeholder groups. In Phase 2 foster parents were included in the stakeholders. The overarching themes coming out of the work with foster parents include the following:

*A significant portion of participants became foster parents because of a previous relationship with the Department, i.e., personal experiences and connections that were directly related to foster care.

*Building an atmosphere of trust, improved communication, etc. would enhance their work on behalf of children and families.

*Foster parents championed the idea of being part of a team that works collectively toward the best interest of the child.

*FP's self-identified as the most effective recruitment and training tool. Issues regarding recruitment centered on systemic issues rather than logistics.

*Decreasing services impacts outcomes.

*Training needs to be updated and restructured to address emerging issues, i.e. older youth.

Foster parents shared their views on various supports, including Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS), training, therapists, etc. The FPSS's position has the potential to become even more effective by expanding the program plan to include coverage in the private agencies. Reports will be published on DNet. The Department will review and refine these recommendations and the outcomes will be part of a larger strategic plan. DCFS has a new division designed to perform this task. Jody and Jeremy will present their work and ways for the SWFCAC to be involved later today.

Update from Permanency Office - Marilyn Arnold

Kellie King is the new contract administrator, overseeing all contracts. Unfortunately she was unable to attend the meeting today. Issues for Kellie may be forwarded through Terry. Procedure 315 is coming out for review and comment November 30th. Rachael Kerrick spearheaded this program. We are going to start training staff in January. Training will be held from January through May for both DCFS and POS supervisors and staff. This training includes contract law, the fictive kin law and the new Foster Child Bill of Rights. It also includes Notice to Grandparents. Marilyn announced that we're soon going to have a host of messaging areas on Dnet including postings from current and former DCFS youth to help inform the Department's work. There will be a messaging system developed to address concerns.

Marilyn announced her retirement at the end of the month, following 29 years of State work. She will be working for the University of Illinois, Division of Specialized Care for Children. She expressed her appreciation to the councils for the work they do for children and families.

Introduction of Council Liaison - Theresa Hughes

Theresa is new to the Department. Her responsibilities are to make sure that all council meetings meet the criteria of the Open Meetings Act and ethics rules. She is happy to be here and commended the Director, stating that she looks forward to working with the Department.

Intensive Placement Services - Jennifer Marett

Jennifer is the Statewide Administrator for Intensive Placement Stabilization Services, formerly the SOC program. On a federal level, there is much work being done on building a System of Care, so this change in program name is, in part, an effort to distinguish between that work and changes coming from within the program itself. Intensive Placement Stabilization Services include a flexible array of services delivered in home, school and community including but not limited to counseling/therapy, advocacy, psychoeducation, respite, mentoring, etc. IPS is a statewide program with services in every LAN in the state of Illinois. IPS programs have to make a home visit within 5 days of accepting the referral and begin working with the family immediately to stabilize the placement. The IPS program outcomes show that 70% of the children and families we work with do not disrupt while IPS is involved. Since 2006 their budget has dropped by 77%. However, IPS has recently received additional funding from the Department, through the BH Consent decree, growing their capacity to serve more children. These funds will be used to provide early intervention to children who are at risk for moving from home to home multiple times. They are mapping (following) cases to identify youth with early instability patterns and provide services to stabilize placements. We have a new service available for children between the ages of 12-18 years called TARGET. TARGET is an evidence based practice for children who have experienced complex trauma. It is an educational and therapeutic approach to help children understand and manage their stress response systems. Nearly every LAN has a TARGET therapist available to them. Traditional and HMR youth are the primary population to be served but children in specialized placements may be served with administrative approval. They use a lot of Attachment, Self-regulation and Competency (ARC) principles in this program. Jen will provide a resource list for Terry to send to the Council. TARGET goes into the Intensive Placement Services range of services. They have some presence in Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings. When emails go out, they may go to foster parents with children already involved in the program, so foster parents may just reply that services are already in place. The last multiple move data report showed around 600 children ages 6-11 were qualified for services under the expansion. Foster parents have to go to the caseworker to make a referral. If responses are not happening in a timely manner, going up the chain, foster parents may contact Debra Dyer Webster, the State Guardian at 312-814-8600.

Credentialing for Treatment Providers - Charles J. Krause

Safety, permanency and wellbeing are all impacted by trauma. 24% of the children in care are exhibiting symptoms. The use of trauma-informed evidence-based practices has been shown to be especially effective with treating young people with single-episode trauma and complex trauma. There are some initiatives already in place and they are working on credentialing trauma-informed evidence-based treatment providers. It involves the Governor's Office, private agencies, DCFS Clinical, DCFS training, and university contractors. You have to either be licensed, or supervised by someone who's licensed in Illinois, with training in designated age groups. There are three levels: Level 1: Bachelor's in social work, counseling, psychology or another health field, working under supervision. Level 2: Licensed Masters or Ph.D./Psy.D. level with some exposure but no certification in EBP, unlicensed under supervision. Level 3: Licensed Masters or Ph.D./Psy.D. level with completion of formal training and certification. The credentialing process involved completing the application and completing required training. Recertification is required every two years. One Hope United, Metropolitan and Chaddock were involved in the pilot. The pilot has impacted the

design and this will be rolled out in three to four weeks. The impact on caregivers will be improvement in trauma-informed services statewide and more accurate, precise resources for caseworkers. They will continue to build and update the Statewide Provider Database. It was pointed out that an important consideration is to find providers that accept the medical card. This is in the counseling program plan now and those agencies that are not currently involved in that contract will have the opportunity in the future. The hope is that eventually any provider seeing any one of our kids will be credentialed.

Trust Based Relational Intervention - Kathleen Bush

Kathleen has spent 21 years working with children and adults experiencing attachment issues and those impacted by trauma. Twelve Baby Fold staff traveled to Texas and trained as Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) educators. They conducted research and have been publishing peer-review studies. Workers are already doing a good job, but when you add TBRI you improve outcomes. TBRI is a therapeutic parenting model developed at Texas Christian University. It has been integrated into the Attachment, Regulation & Competency (ARC) therapy model developed by Margaret Blaustein and Kristine M. Kinniburgh. This is evidence-informed, evidence-based work. It is used for understanding client/family issues, improving parents' mindfulness, providing concrete positive parenting techniques, and significantly improving the emotional connection of adoptive parents to their children. The Baby Fold is involved in research and trust-based relational intervention. TBRI and ARC combined provide a holistic assessment and treatment model. Theraplay® is blended into this program. There is the option to utilize programs based on Christian principles.

TBRI is based on three principals:

- 1) Connection – focusing on attachment issue, engagement skills, mindfulness, etc.
- 2) Empowerment – that's the child's makeup, physiological issues – what is the child sensitive to?
- 3) Correction – proactive connection focuses on helping a child function correctly in their world. They also talk about responsive strategies.

Kathleen discussed the levels of response and the IDEAL response.

Immediate: respond within seconds

Direct: engage child directly

Efficient: only use the level of response essential for addressing the challenge – if playful redirection works, this is what you should use.

Action-based: “re-do” to enhance body memory.

Levels of response

Kelly stated, and others concurred, that it would be wonderful if Adoption Preservation providers would all have access to TBRI resources.

Lunch – Recognition of Adoption Month

Presentation for Adoption Month - Elizabeth Richmond/Sarah Olson/Debra Dyer-Webster

Debra Dyer Webster, the State Guardian recognized Jim Jones for his commitment to children and families and his work with the Adoption Advisory Council. Jim noted the importance of three components when parenting our children, i.e., the public sector, the private sector and the volunteer sector. He commended council members for their collaboration in parenting our children.

Introduction of Cook Regional Administrator - Jacqui Colyer

Ms. Colyer said that she has been in Cook County for a short time and noted that she has enjoyed every single day. She is originally from Miami, Florida, where she served as a Regional Director with a similar job in child welfare. She stated that she “grew up” in child welfare as an early investigator, then placement worker and was married to a juvenile probation officer. She said that her husband loved every child on his caseload and supported them by giving them second chances. He particularly loved one young man and every time this young man ran away from the foster home or the detention center he would wind up at their home. The final time he ran away he told them that he “had a plan.” As a 14-year-old he announced in court that he’d found a family. Everyone was elated. His plan was to enter Job Corps when he was sixteen, but until that time he’d found a family to live with. He told the judge that Jacqui and her husband would make great parents for him. It turned out that they were the prospective parents he had in mind. They became his foster parents while in their mid-20’s and later adopted him. They had great supports from family members and other foster parents. This young man thrived and his son now lives in Chicago.

She asked for support and understanding from the councils and promised to listen and try to figure out ways to really make things work better within the system. She noted that she is an “out of the box” thinker. One of the big goals that they are working on under the direction of Director Sheldon is getting children under six out of shelters. (Jacqui is focusing on Cook County and Jody is focusing on the work statewide.) They are working on a program called, “Foster Care First” to prevent children from entering the shelter. She noted that she has an amazing staff of people accomplishing so much under sometimes very difficult circumstances. In Cook they’re working on “Home for the Holidays,” a program for 12 and older youth and how to get them back home. Staff has been asked to interview and take a picture of the children they’re looking at trying to get home for the holidays, keeping photos in front of them, encouraging them to move forward. Some have already identified school counselors, friends from churches, mentors, etc. They’ve decided that even if not everyone is adopted they will have identified mentors and ongoing connections for them. She offered her business cards, noting her availability to the council.

Office of Communication/Adoption Celebration - Vanessa James

Vanessa is now part of the Office of Communications. She introduced Veronica Resa, the Acting Deputy Director of Communications. Chief of Staff Andrew Flach remains actively involved in setting direction for the communications strategy and community partnerships. Vanessa reported meeting with James McIntyre from the Foster Care Alumni Association about the Thanksgiving Dinner event to be held at UCAN on November 21st. They’re trying to open it up to both youth formerly in care and those currently in care. National Adoption Day will be celebrated on November 20th in Cook County. They plan to do a special call for the presentation to the court for interim orders and finalizations. Friends at Illinois Center for Adoption and Permanency, formerly Adoptions Unlimited, will be making donations, as will Metropolitan Family Services. The Cook County adoption staff will be on hand. The event will be held in the kid’s area on the 17th floor of the Daley Center. Vanessa is trying to identify more adoptive families with stories they may highlight during the event. The Office of Communications is creating a framework for similar court events like that in Rockford and now Cook County to culminate in a statewide celebration. She is working closely with Pam Mills, the DCFS Statewide Adoption Administrator. In addition to Adoption Day, DCFS is coordinating the Home for the Holidays initiative to increase permanency outcomes by the end of the year.

Div. of Strategic Planning & Innovation - Jody Grutza / Jeremy Harvey

Jody is the new Deputy Director of Strategic Planning and Innovation. She introduced herself to the council, noting that she is originally from Detroit, Michigan and came to Chicago from Clearwater, Florida where she worked with Eckerd. She has experience in strategy, marketing, policy, etc. She noted that Florida has a privatized system of care and Eckerd acts as DCFS for 5,000 children on any given day. Prior to her work in Florida, she did a lot of policy work on a national level, providing a link to child welfare directors across the nation. She worked in the field, then used her experience as she moved into the policy arena.

Jody joined the IDCFS team to drive, track and implement reforms. Historically, Illinois has been “the best” and we’re working to bring back that reputation. She commended council members for their work in meeting the needs of children in care and advocating on their behalf. They’re looking at the BH Expert Panel recommendations, legislation, and other current reform work to inform a strategic plan that sets out a clear mission, vision and values. Our director is really focused on normalcy for kids and empowering foster parents to meet the needs of children and youth. They will work to get a handle on the data and making connections to improve services and supports for our children. They’ll be identifying key outcomes. Ultimately, they will follow up to drive these outcomes. If data shows a slip, they’ll work to identify the reason. They will be doing focus groups and other things to engage foster parents in the process. Jody is used to a much more informal approach to engagement of foster parents in child welfare. She spoke about doing informal local foster parent support groups where foster parents might rely on one another for respite, etc. They’ll have their first team retreat next week and will start to set parameters. She noted that Jeremy Harvey and April Curtis, former youth in care, have also joined their team.

Discussion:

- *Will there be continuity and standardization of services and supports throughout the state?* They will be looking at timeliness of permanency and outcomes for kids and the plan needs to be standardized throughout the state.
- *Do we have statistics on re-entry rates for reunification success?* Susan Smith recently presented that sort of data to DCFS management and to CWAC. Jody’s willing to come to our meetings to work through the data they’re examining. One of the things they’re looking at is differential response – identifying whether numbers may be driven by laws. There are many data collectors in Illinois and they’re working toward providing some consistency in gathering this information.
- *What are you doing to provide resources and supports for foster parents?* Foster parents are the experts. They are looking at the FPSS program and will consider ways to replicate that throughout the state. Debra noted that they’re looking at training to focus on providing more in-depth training focused on issues that foster parents believe are important. A new initiative will be piloted in Cook County connecting foster parents, with ongoing support.
- *It seems like many are moving from DCFS supervision to private agencies due to a lack of services through DCFS.* Ashley suggested that the Department connect with POS agencies to provide shared services and supports.
- *There are issues with training times and the lack of child care.* We should find ways to provide child care, using local college volunteer programs, etc. Jacqui stated that in Miami they partnered with the day care stakeholders to provide supports on weekends, in evenings, etc. She noted that we’ll be looking at our “natural partners.” Cook County is resource rich but we’re not seeing resources being fully utilized. It was noted that Peoria tried to use a natural partner, with a church offering to provide free respite, but there were too many barriers.
- *Is there anything to address the court system?* Director Sheldon is really good at working across systems to help remove barriers and support normalcy. Director Sheldon reported early on that in

Florida they held massive conferences with every kind of stakeholder. We're looking at doing that sort of thing here.

- Some foster parents must pay for respite out of their own pockets. In some cases, respite is paid by the agency or DCFS, on a limited basis.
- One of the things we'll be working toward is viewing progress, even in small steps.
- The Quality Parenting Initiative involves using foster parents as mentors to provide supports.
- Council members encouraged administration to be mindful of services to areas outside Cook County, including rural areas.
- Provide effective steps for crisis management rather than give a runaround with phones that go unanswered, etc.
- Hope reported that her agency in Southern Illinois is very proactive in meeting needs.
- In light of the new Responsible Parenting strategies – when are foster parents going to be able to make prudent and responsible decisions about their licenses?

Contact Jody Grutza at 312-814-4198 or Jody.Grutza@illinois.gov

Jeremy Harvey was recognized and invited to introduce himself. Jeremy spent 20 years in foster care in Illinois, and noted that as he navigated the system he had access to many services and supports. Jeremy worked for seven years with the State Guardian's office. He stated that our responsibility as councils is to be proactive.

Update from Director's Office - Acting Director George Sheldon

Director Sheldon opened by recognizing Jim Jones, former IAAC co-chair, expressing appreciation for everything Jim has done in this state. Director Sheldon has been here for eight months. He stated that what he's found out is that the Illinois system needs more reform even than what he had to deal with in Florida. We have the longest length of stay of any state in the nation. There is a higher reliance on residential in this state. We need to build community supports and wrap around services to help step down the child. There's a substantial amount of systemic reform that has to take place.

Director Sheldon commended the dedicated staff and leaders that have been working hard for many years. He distributed and reviewed the org chart. He stated that generally, he is not a proponent of reorganization. However, he had 16 Deputies when he came and had to do some basic restructuring. He said that this agency has been overly bureaucratic. We have driven decision making by rules rather than outcomes. Over the years he's learned that an incident happens and they made a rule for it. He gave the example of the nine layers of bureaucracy it takes to increase capacity. He said that we have to provide flexibility on the front line to have the prudence to make decisions. He noted that there is risk in every decision we make as an agency. If we wrap these kids so tightly in a cocoon they will age out without the skills and resources they need. He reported that approximately 70 – 80% of the inmates in Illinois Corrections had some contact with child welfare in Illinois. We will be moving legislatively to empower foster parents to make decisions to help provide more support for our children and youth.

Director Sheldon's goal is to move more quickly to permanency, noting that we need to provide the kind of post adoption support that allows adoption to succeed. We cannot continue this heavy reliance on the state budget. We're spending \$125,000 on deep-end residential. We need to be more strategic in reducing the number of children in care. We put out an RFP for therapeutic pilots and have identified the three communities that are the largest utilizers of therapeutic placements. We are rolling out the Quality Parenting Initiatives in these three areas. He's asking his staff to operate under a sense of urgency and common sense. If it is important to make decisions, they need to gather the information necessary and make the decision in a timely manner. He asked for the

councils to give specific examples of issues that need to be addressed and recommendations as to resolution.

We still don't have a budget. Some of our private agencies are able to continue operating under a line of credit, but we are in a serious financial crisis in Illinois.

We have to increase our efforts with the legislature but we have to get the courts involved to reduce the length of stay. He's working with the chief judges to educate them and provide guidance. A lot of work is based on relationships. They have to use innovative approaches in order to increase the federal draw-down on older youth. Just closing and reopening cases enabled DCFS to increase federal funding by millions of dollars. A council member mentioned the breakdown in communication between workers, lawyers and judges, sometimes due to a difference in language. Director gave the example of using an Administrative Law Judge's orders to impact future work, i.e. "lessons learned." He referenced the experiential training house at UIS used to provide training opportunities. We're trying to work with Loyola Law School to do a joint effort where workers can learn specifics re: behavior in the courtroom and how to lay out the case. Debra noted that we offer testifying training and other court training for workers, but workers were often too busy to attend training. There should be a template to standardize court reports, but each county requires something different. Police reports include a case summary and we're looking at requiring a case summary in SACWIS.

Adjourn - Kurt Kalas made the motion to adjourn. Kelly Green seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Next Meeting Dates:

IAAC – February 5, 2016 - Conference Call

SWFCAC – January 15, 2016 – Baby Fold, 612 Oglesby Ave., Normal