

SWFCAC Meeting
APPROVED MINUTES
February 20, 2015 ~ 9am - 3pm
Eastland Suites, 1801 Eastland Drive, Bloomington

SWFCAC Members Present	SWFCAC Members Absent	DCFS Staff
Pauline Barlow	Lee Coffman	Paul Alferink
Gladys Boyd	Irma Dixon	Kevin Blickhan
Charlene Burris	Allison Cugier	Geneva Byrd
Edith Cruz	Michael Simpson	Cynthia Cherry
Judi Enix	Pamela Webb	Debra Dyer-Webster
Kelly Fargher		Gwenn Eyer
Laura Hart		Kamaria Gammon
Doreen Henry	Guests	Michelle Grove
Darrin Holt	Angela Barber	Susan Jensen
Stephanie Jones	Julie Cebulski	Terry McGlothlin
Kurt Kalas	Robyn Harvey	Desiree Silva
Cathy McCoy	Jessica Janicki	Tracy Wolf
Mark McDaniel	Darla Knipe	
Kellye Norris	Maria Levengood	
Sarah Olson		
Carol Sheley		

Welcome & Introductions – Sarah Olson, SWFCAC Chair

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 January 16, 2015 Meeting

Gladys Boyd made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2015 SWFCAC meeting. Doreen Henry seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

NEW BUSINESS

Office of the Guardian - Debra Dyer Webster

Debra stated that she doesn't have any new initiatives or activities to report. She brought greetings from Acting Director George Sheldon, noting that he began his work last Tuesday. She met with him Wednesday and he seems very interested in meeting the stakeholders, including the advisory boards. He believes in transparency and in truly partnering with our partners and other stakeholders.

Division of Permanency - Kamaria Gammon

Kamaria reported that Marilyn Arnold asked her to share the changes to 315, Permanency Planning. It is ready for revision.

Training – Cynthia Cherry

We are on target for PRIDE Illinois training with roll out in July. Southern region would like to do videoconferences for training. This would be most effective for the rural communities, using local colleges as training sites. California is impressed with our Sexual Health curriculum and if they determine to utilize it, our trainers will go out to train trainers. A workgroup will soon be looking at the HMR training, utilizing some of the information from PRIDE Illinois and adding details about visitation issues, safety plans and court hearings that are more specific to relatives.

Virtual Training Center - Paul Alferink

Paul described the Virtual Training Center (VTC), which gives the Office of Training the ability to track trainings, serve as a repository for training documents, give special classes and even offer exams. If foster parents were licensed after 2007 they automatically have a VTC account, and most other foster parents have accounts, as well. The Registration Clerks can walk you through setting up an account or getting your password when you call 877-800-3393. Paul referenced links designed specifically for foster parents and presented a visual overview of the VTC. When asked about allowing make up hours for the longer training like Effective Black Parenting he noted that there may be at least a month and sometimes a year or two between sessions, so it's not really a feasible option. He stated that foster parents will get the hours credited for the sessions that they attended.

New training is available for Connecting with Your Brothers and Sisters and this interactive training is suited for youth, parents and professionals. It is designed to engage youth in the training.

Michelle stated that the curriculum developers are working hard to make more On Demand trainings available online, noting that trainings are approved to be in line with DCFS rule and procedure before being posted. (On Demand classes do not require pre-registration.)

Presentations:

Status of Scoring Implementation Plans - Gwenn Eyer

Gwenn thanked council members for their work, noting that all plans have been scored and averaged. Forty-five plans were Acceptable, nine were Somewhat Acceptable and one very small new agency submitted a plan that was Not Acceptable. Feedback letters will go out at the end of the month and we will provide technical support to the agency with a Not Acceptable plan to help them improve their plan.

SWFCAC Agency Review Training - Gwenn Eyer

Gwenn distributed training packets and reviewed the basic steps for conducting agency reviews. She then invited Council members to join her in providing an interactive demonstration of what an agency review looks like.

Bureau Chief, Operations - Michael Ruppe

Michael oversees many areas, including Permanency, Child Protection Investigations, Residential Matching, Dually Involved Youth, Norman Services, RA's, ACR's, etc. Three Deputy Chiefs report to him. He and other peer Deputies have been meeting with the new Director. Michael reported that Casey Foundation work began last winter with a little different focus and with the new Governor coming in, and Interim/Acting Directors, they were asked to assist in addressing three key areas:

1. Use of data, both what's available and what's needed to track outcomes.
2. Child Protection Decisions – Safety, supervision, critical thinking
3. Residential –planning, matching, placement,resources

Meetings with Casey started last week and they are setting up action items. He recognized Debra, who is also involved. She stated that they will be setting short and long term goals. They'll work together two days a week for approximately six weeks.

Other activities in Operations:

- Updating procedures for investigations. When it went out for public comment, they received more than 400 pages of comments. They're pleased that people took the time to read and offer feedback. They're reviewing every item to see what works best to conduct this work with our various partners. Some sections are new. They're currently finishing reviewing comments on allegations and when they get the final version, training will roll out to everyone involved. Michael included frontline workers and supervisors from the field as well as other staff to serve as a work group with the Office of Policy. They hope that work will be completed within 30 days.
- They are working on Head Trauma training for investigations, a training that has been under revision. Other trainings are also being revised.
- They're also working on procedures to bring everything up to date to reflect current practice.
- Monitoring Unit – The Department tried to achieve 500 adoptions/sub guardianships in 50 days and actually ended with 530. This work will be continued. Beginning today, they're working on 1200 adoptions/sub guardianships by June 30'th in the private sector, using the Permanency Achievement staff to help troubleshoot and assisting in moving these forward. The goal is to ensure this is embedded in practice.
- They are very focused on addressing issues in residential. Casey is also partnering with us on this work.
- They are looking at the CERAP protocol. They're going back to look at older OIG reports with regard to safety assessments. They pulled a group together to potentially make changes to the CERAP process. What should the plan contain? How does the monitoring work?
- Right now the division is in a pretty good place re: staffing. They hold monthly meetings to assess staffing needs and use the following goals: Investigators: 10 new cases a month, Placement: 15 cases, High Risk Intact: 10 new cases.
- They're working on a Statewide Recruitment Plan and other resources needed for residential, foster care, etc. When completed, it was recommended that we ask Jataun Rollins to share it with the Council.
- Dually Involved works with Mike's staff to follow youth that are released from the juvenile justice system.

Kevin Blickhan, Central Region Resource Recruitment Supervisor, commented that they are looking at a number of different things, both more homes, but also utilization of homes, monitoring kids in shelter care, kids that need specialized care, and kids in residential. They've moved from about 30 kids to about 12 in residential in Central Region. Mike noted that Southern region is comparable. They have had no one placed in the shelter past 47 days. (There is often an issue of available beds.) When finding it necessary to place kids out of their home communities they're working hard to get them back home as soon as they can.

OLD BUSINESS

Legislative/Policy Issues – Darrin Holt

They met February 11th via conference call where they finalized their work plan. The committee will provide guidance to the council to ensure that their work is within the parameters of the Foster Parent Law and the Council bylaws. They will develop guidelines for the Council and make adjustments to the rating instruments for the Foster Parent Law implementation plans and agency reviews. Their standing meeting will always be the second Wednesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. via conference call. Issues to be addressed include recommendations on pending policy changes for foster parent involvement in residential care and a review of the guidelines for the implementation plan scoring process. A copy of their work plan was distributed for review.

Adolescent Issues – Mike Simpson

NO REPORT

Foster Parent Support Specialists - Edith Cruz

They met via conference call January 28th at 9:30 and have begun developing their work plan.

Respite - Gladys Boyd

This committee met the night before the meeting and formulated a recommendation. They have revised an earlier letter they'd written to the Director. Sarah read the letter to the council.

Discussion: Add language to indicate that this is a *minimum* requirement. In some regions they're showing placement changes when respite is utilized. Respite plans should be standardized and in writing and should be reflected in contracts. Add language re: *standardization*. Sarah commended the work of the Respite Committee. The letter will be edited and the council will review for approval in March.

Reports from Other Councils/Committees/Workgroups:

CWAC - Cathy McCoy and Darrin Holt

The next meeting is scheduled for February 26th so they will report at the March meeting.

IFAPA - Gladys Boyd

The Illinois Foster Adoptive Parent Association will meet April 11th from 9 – 2 at the 1st United Methodist Church in Pontiac.

PII Workgroup - Sarah Olson

No Report

P315

No Report

Regional Reports

Northern Region – Cathy McCoy deferred to Robyn Harvey

Robin reported that January's meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. Their February meeting was cancelled due to Lincoln's Birthday office closure.

Southern Region – Mark McDaniels

A meeting was to be held on January 20th.

Central Region – Carol Sheley

The seven area offices are tasked with setting up local meetings. They hold monthly phone calls to address regional issues. Carol Sheley reported that support groups are going and an initial meeting was held in Jacksonville. Elizabeth reported that Peoria held a meeting last night.

Cook North - Edith Cruz

Their meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month. They had 12 participants, in person and by phone. The speaker trained on discipline.

Cook South - Kellye Norris and Pamela Webb

The next meeting will be held on the 17th in the Emerald office.

Cook Central - Doreen Henry

The last meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. Charlene plans to attend the meeting this week and will report at the next meeting.

Agency Reviews were assigned.

Committees were given the opportunity to meet.

Other Issues:

Pamela noted that she and others are being required to front payment for Day Care and relying on the provider to refund their money once approval comes through several months later. Discussion indicated that foster parents may be held responsible for payment until approval is received.

Darla Knipe said foster children, age 3-5 are required to go to pre-school. If the school does not have a pre-k program, transportation is not available. Foster parents are not reimbursed for the transportation, and it is a difficulty to foster parents who work because not all day cares are willing to transport a child to and from pre-k. She gave an example of a foster parent who has to make a round trip to take a child to pre-k and then make the round trip again in 2 hours to pick them up for a total of 52 miles per day, 5 days a week.

Adjourn

Gladys Boyd made the motion to adjourn. Doreen Henry seconded and the motion carried.

Potential Agenda Items:

Letter to Director to request that FPSS funds be attached to FY '16 contracts.

Foster parent involvement in step-down or step-up, Michael C. Jones

Programs available for youth transitioning out of care, i.e., Youth in College, Youth in Employment, Scholarships, etc. (Kim Peck)

Budget update

Next Meeting – March 20 – Alton Holiday Inn, 3800 Homer Adams Parkway