



## Clark County Department of Family Services

Co-Lead Workgroup

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 16, 2016 – 12:30pm-2:00pm

### ATTENDEES

Jocelyn Bluitt-Fisher, Richard Egan, Kevin McDonald, Cynthia Metzger, Denise Parker, Shannon Rooney, Tara Donahue, Ann-Marie Abruscato, Mark Fitzgerald, Alison Caliendo

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### AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions
  2. Conference update
    - Florida conference
    - Texas conference
    - National Foster Parent Association conference
    - Ohio conference
  3. Foster parent associations update
  4. April – child abuse prevention month; May – foster parent month
  5. Committee membership
  6. Work plans for upcoming year
    - Recruitment
    - Communication
    - Child Welfare
    - Training
    - Support & Retention
    - Community Partnerships
  7. Next meeting – May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016
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## MINUTES

### 2. Conference update

- Florida conference
  - Denise reported, on behalf of the team that went, experiences at the QPI conference in Florida. Florida is the state where QPI started and at the conference some of the issues they faced were discussed, such as struggle with consistency, normalcy and transitions.
  - Some interesting differences that she noted included the fact that their Children's Legal Aid Society handles foster parent training and all training on transitions. Additionally, investigations are done by law enforcement and this creates many communication issues for foster families.
  - There was a speaker named Denise Goodman whom Denise would like to have come speak for our department and families. She specializes in a unique process for matching foster children to specific families, especially higher level of care placements and teens.
  
- Texas conference
  - This conference will be happening March 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>
  - We will be represented by a case manager, a foster parent, leadership and QPI coordinator.
  - Discussion topics will include new sites, sharing what works and doesn't work and the PRIME Program.
  
- National foster parent association conference
  - This conference will be held June 20-26 here in Las Vegas at the Flamingo Hotel & Casino.
  - The theme has been announced: "Better Together"
  - We maintain the goal to produce local (statewide) energy for this event. However, some of the barriers include high costs for our families as well as gaining the participation of Washoe and the other rural counties.
  - There will be a community panel at the conference to represent our state.
  - Efforts for promotion of this event are in the works. We have plans to include information about it on the DFS website.
  
- Ohio conference
  - This conference is the last week of September. We are sending at least 20 people.
  - Tracts include judges and relative caregivers.
  - How/who do we want to send? We will decipher this once we know more about the topics of discussion. Ideas include: case managers, co-leads, legal representation and families.

### **3. Foster parent associations update**

- The foster parent association that we are currently working on will include: Fostering of Southern NV, Foster Kinship, Foster Connect, Foster and Adoptive Coalition, a Spanish-speaking group and a staff group.
- The goal is to create an umbrella organization that pools resource to support foster, adoptive and kinship caregivers. It will be a membership-based 501c3 non-profit organization. The organization will meet monthly, all are welcome to join and it will have links to the national organization.
- Potential idea: develop a survey that may identify some needed work goals for this group.
- We are currently developing workgroup goals and what is needed to accomplish them. Concentration will be on education and training quality and welcoming adoptive families.

### **4. April – child abuse prevention month; May – foster parent month**

- March is social worker appreciation month.
- April is child abuse prevention month.
  - April 8<sup>th</sup> DFS employees wear blue
  - “Pinwheels for Prevention” event
- May is foster parent appreciation month.
  - Certificates and pins are being sent out to foster parents
  - Other ideas are in the works
  - We will hopefully be able to do a night at the Discovery Museum for foster families.
  - The goal is to come up with new and different ways to show our foster parents our appreciation.

### **5. Committee membership**

- Advice to co-leads:
  - Enhance connections to improve committee membership.
  - Stay balanced and involved.

### **6. Work plans for upcoming year**

- Each workgroup was asked to have a work plan for the upcoming year prepared to share today.

### Training

- Develop trainings in transitions.
- Send out change in training hours letter (soon).
- Continue with Just in Time training (contract is being extended).

- Continue to develop the preservice training curriculum, working with the writers we have hired. We hope to have this done by the end of June.
- Pursue federal grants for developing training.
- Develop partnership with the Youth Law Center.

#### Support & Retention

- Work with community partners and internal teams to support caregivers of all kinds and decrease the number of disruptions to children and youth in care.
- Utilize data, feedback and survey results to reduce foster parent attrition rates and increase the number of quality foster homes.
- Collaborate with DFS management in the ongoing development of plans, decision making and policy development that affects caregivers.
- Develop and implements an employee foster parent support group for DFS employees who are foster parents.
- Develop a grievance/concern policy that will allow caregivers a process in which to resolve concerns in a proactive, consistent and timely manner.

#### Recruitment

- Work with market segmentation to develop recruitment goals to increase and target quality caregivers.
- Utilize a parallel recruitment process to continue recruitment events within the community.
- Update and revise current marketing materials to reflect targeted recruitment from a market segmentation perspective to ensure materials convey the information they were designed to communicate.
- The Placement Utilization Sub-Workgroup will be meeting monthly to brainstorm barriers and solutions to making the most appropriate and supportive placements possible in a timely manner, creating and developing recommendations to implement change to the matching and placement process.
- Strengthen partnership with agencies providing foster care to share recruitment, placement and support practices that best meet the needs of children in care.

#### Communications

- Increase internal DFS and external (community partners, agencies) readership of the Caregiver Courier.
- Promote awareness of all of the QPI workgroups and their activities to DFS and caregivers
- Develop new communication channels and opportunities as well as communications planning to better reach the caregiver community.

#### Child Welfare

- Develop policy and procedures and begin on a partnership plan.
- Focus on the 360 reviews when developing policy and procedures.

- Gather research on transitions. One topic of interest is the removal of birth names.
- Brainstorm new ways we can offer post-adoption support.
- Research possible grants available to us.
- Research issues in adoption subsidies and visitation.

#### Community Partnerships

- Build community support for foster children and foster parents through cultivation of effective community partnerships with the business, faith-based, non-profit, philanthropic, public and private child welfare caregiver community.
- Identify gaps in services for foster families and foster children and connect them to community resources to meet their needs.
- Identify opportunities to involve the community, especially businesses, faith-based organizations and non-profits in providing support for children in care.
- Develop and launch a public awareness campaign to educate the community on the child welfare system and how they can get involved.

**7. Next Meeting: May 18, 2016 from 12:30-2:30pm at the DFS Central Office.**