



# Clark County Department of Family Services

## Implementation Team Meeting

Meeting Minutes from May 13, 2014 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

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### **Present**

Larry Bowen (Foster Parent), Dianne Brocks (Foster Parent), Ali Caliendo (Foster Parent and Foster Kinship), Shauna Davis (Children's Advocacy Alliance), Cindy DeGan (Eagle Quest), Jennifer Erbes (Maplestar), Bonnie Fitch (Rockin Music Zoo), Sonji Green (Kid's Peace), Matt Gyger, Sheila Parks (CASA), Margarita Perez (Foster Parent), Pam Porter (Olive Crest), Audrey Rosenstein (Fostering Southern Nevada), Jamie Ross (PACT Coalition), Jessica Rue (The Adoption Exchange), Jennifer Smith (UMSUM) and Karlene Ulibarri (Bountiful Family)

Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS) Director: Lisa Ruiz-Lee  
DFS Assistant Directors: Paula Hammack and Michael Knight

DFS Staff –Karen Atlantic, Oscar Benavides, Virgil Clark, Brittany Daffron, Tracy Damewood, Tara Donohue, Jeanne Dubois, Darrell Ford, Mark Fitzgerald, Brenda Herbstman, Minnie Hill, Kristi Jourdan , Traci Nellis, Mari Parlade, Carolyn Potter, Alex Ortiz, Kevin MacDonald, Carrie McIlvain, Cynthia Metzger, Denise Parker, Shannon Rooney, Gina Shanks, Cheryl Shuberea, Antoinelle Slaughter, Lauren Soskin, Barbara Straight, Christina Vela, Andre Wade and Lauren Wagner

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### **Agenda**

- Welcome and Introductions
  - National Conference Update
    - Statewide work groups
- Work group updates
  - Support and Retention
  - Community Partnership
  - Training
  - Recruitment
  - Communication Plan
  - Child Welfare Services
- Community review – Christina Vela
  - Child Transition Survey
  - Partnership Plan

- Other Information
  - Next Meeting Date – Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
    - Location to be announced later
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## Minutes

### Meeting Content:

1. Welcome and introductions were done
2. Foster Care Awareness Month was discussed
  - a. Everyone who works with the kids was acknowledged by Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) Coordinator, Denise Parker
  - b. There is no way the Department of Family Services (DFS) can do this work without the support of our caregivers and staff
3. The objective for the meeting was stated
  - a. Work groups have accomplished so very much and will be outlining some of them in this meeting
  - b. Attendees will work on putting together ideas for future initiatives
4. National meeting was discussed
  - a. One hundred seventy-five (175) people attended
  - b. Forty (40) sites and five (5) states were represented
  - c. One of the things that came out of that conference is the initiation of statewide work groups
    - i. They are working on four (4) subjects
      1. Information sharing and confidentiality
      2. Normalcy
      3. Foster Parent Handbook
      4. UNITY revisions
    - ii. They meet locally and then share information with the state level
  - d. Carol Schauffer, Senior Director, Strategic Initiatives with the Youth Law Center, spoke about the conference
    - i. Commended us on how well the conference went
    - ii. San Diego is now on board with being the next site for QPI
    - iii. Commented we could have had two hundred and fifty (250) attendees and had to turn people away
    - iv. Stated people are coming together as a team across the country as well as across the state
    - v. Sites sharing with other sites will create a network and information will create things across the nation
  - e. Denise mentioned we are sponsoring three (3) foster families that are going to the National Fostering Conference
  - f. QPI is about getting the best care for our kids and figuring out how we need to change the way we do business to support that care

5. Support and Retention work group reported on their progress
  - a. One of the accomplishments of the work group is the creation of the Caregiver Survey
    - i. Through the survey DFS is asking the foster parents what their needs are
    - ii. It is finished and has been approved
    - iii. Beta testing is going on now
    - iv. Administration of the survey should be completed by the end of June
    - v. DFS will offer an incentive of a ten dollar (\$10.00) gift card
    - vi. It takes about forty-five (45) minutes to complete
  - b. The work group members are looking at the attrition data regarding license closures
    - i. Members are working to discover why they are closing
    - ii. DFS does lose a certain amount due to adoption
    - iii. Carol asked if we have any results of the reasons for licensing closing
      1. Not yet, we are in the initial stages of looking at that data
    - iv. Noted that UNITY doesn't currently allow a worker to put in "reunification" as a reason for closure
    - v. There are currently one hundred and one (101) families that are being called by DFS Licensing staff to discover why they left and get a teachable moment
  - c. The work group is examining the DFS grievance policy
    - i. They discovered no one knows what it is and it isn't being used
      1. This is not an anecdotal issue
  - d. Foster Parent Champion (FPC) program was discussed
    - i. FPC team is contacting all of the caregivers, introducing the program, checking their contact information and updating it in UNITY
    - ii. At the time the survey is being launched, the contact information should all be current
    - iii. The team is also taking referrals from case workers
    - iv. DFS Licensing will also be utilizing them for referrals too
    - v. The team staffs many community events
    - vi. They staff a caregiver hotline Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm
6. Community Partnership work group reported on their progress
  - a. One of the major milestones was the Ka-Boom event
    - i. DFS staff were acknowledged for how they organized it
    - ii. The event brought many community partners to the attention of the work group and they are fostering relationships with them
    - iii. The event identified where DFS can help meet some of the needs of caregivers

- iv. Foster friendly businesses will be giving discounts to foster families
    - 1. The Foster Friendly program was born out of the National conference
    - 2. It allows the community to be supportive of the foster families
    - 3. It was launched at Ka-Boom
    - 4. Foster Friendly program will be reaching out to the connections that were made at Ka-Boom
    - 5. The work group is looking to have a certificate created for placement in the foster friendly businesses
    - 6. Hoping to have an event to invite businesses to become foster friendly businesses
    - 7. Asked how businesses should contact DFS if they are interested
      - a. The phone number and email address were given
  - b. A representative from United Methodist Service Ministry (UMSM) spoke about the connection between DFS and their organization
    - i. They are working on a program that will be working with kids taken out of the sex trade business
    - ii. Foster friends will provide support services like baby sitting and mentoring
    - iii. They will provide an ear for caregivers
    - iv. They are a faith based organization
    - v. Volunteers will be attending an event so that they can meet the foster families June 22, 2014 from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
    - vi. They have the only off site visitation centers
    - vii. UMSM will be one of the first foster friendly organizations
- 7. Training work group reported on their progress**
- a. Discussed an increase in required training hours for foster parents and the Just In Time website
    - i. A proposal was sent to DFS management to increase the relicensing requirement for training hours from four (4) to twelve (12)
    - ii. The proposal also recommended mandated training in the following topics:
      - 1. CPR and First Aid
      - 2. Car Seats
      - 3. Trauma Informed Care
      - 4. Crisis behavioral management in ages and stages
    - iii. Announced there have been lots of issues with kids being dropped off without notice at Child Haven which prompted the work group to examine if DFS is providing foster parents with enough training
    - iv. The work group is hoping to create more skills and more reasonable expectations for the parents through the required trainings

- v. The thought being that if people know what to expect, they are less likely to be caught off guard
  - vi. The available trainings will be changing each year so there is a variety
- b. Asked if the work group would be focusing on creating trainings regarding caring for children with disabilities
- i. Yes, that will be a component
  - ii. Mentioned that a lot of kids coming into Child Haven have disabilities which would speak to their specific behaviors and it may not be due to their development level it may be part of their disability
  - iii. A training on this specific topic is something that can be added later
- c. On-going training will help to support our families
- d. Informed the group if there is something that they think is needed for training, it can be added to the Just In Time site
- i. Suggestions should be emailed to the DFS Training department
- e. The work group is getting community partners to help create supplemental trainings
- f. Discussed major changes and updates to the Just In Time site
- i. A list of all trainings on the ground was added
  - ii. New trainings have been added to the videos on the site
  - iii. Star chart training review was added
  - iv. A calendar of all meetings of QPI was added
  - v. All Caregiver Currier editions were added
  - vi. List of caregiver resources was added
  - vii. Just In Time is not just restricted to video trainings it provides additional information for caregivers
  - viii. Added a foster parent phone book
  - ix. A calendar of events in the community was added
- g. Announced there is a new National QPI website
- i. It includes QPI for Kids
- h. Work group's goal has been to have one (1) night a month to have foster parents come into DFS to use computers
- i. Foster parents without internet access are a minority
  - ii. Stated there are some programs available that help to get computers for kids
  - iii. The work group is looking at getting a computer lab for them
  - iv. It was thought there are computers at the Visitation Center, but a foster parent said there aren't any computers available
  - v. Mentioned part of the problem may be that the foster parents don't know how to use computers
    1. Asked if DFS staff could show them how to access the Just In Time site
    2. Suggested this can also be done at an association meeting

- i. Commented there is not much training on the site in Spanish
  - i. Announced DFS just got all new interpreter equipment so the amount of Spanish content should increase
- 8. Recruitment work group reported on their progress**
  - a. Discussed the creation of identification (ID) cards for foster parents
    - i. There was a need for foster parents to have ID for different situations
    - ii. It can be used for discounts and at court
    - iii. Barbara Straight went to the schools to find out how they create their ID cards
    - iv. The software is being donated to DFS
    - v. The first year the ID will be made from card stock
    - vi. Next year the ID will be a hard plastic
    - vii. The IDs should be rolled out within the next two (2) months
  - b. Market segmentation was discussed
    - i. The results of the project will help DFS develop a marketing and recruiting strategy
    - ii. DFS will be working with Nielsen and the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment (NRCDR)
    - iii. It will identify who we consider quality parents, then find out where they come from and then we will be better able to market to them
    - iv. Hoping to have the research back by the end of the summer
    - v. Hope to have the recruitment strategy done by the end of the year
    - vi. This will also assist with targeting parents for the harder to place children
  - c. Discussed other avenues of recruiting
    - i. Two to three (2-3) events will be attended per month by DFS Recruitment staff
    - ii. Purchased yellow t-shirts that say Ask Me About Fostering to help identify foster parents and staff
    - iii. Work group is working with communications group to identify organizations in the community where we can do presentations
    - iv. Work group is also working with the faith-based community for presentations
  - d. Discussed the creation of business cards for foster parents to be able to distribute when asked about fostering
    - i. They are in the design stage
- 9. Communication work group reported on their progress**
  - a. Announced that Caregiver Currier goes out monthly
    - i. It is sent via email
    - ii. The group was invited to submit ideas for articles
    - iii. An article about the importance of using technology written by Larry Bowen, foster parent, will be in the next Caregiver Currier

- iv. The work group is looking at other options for people without computer access
  - b. Work group is constructing a strategic plan for internal and external communications
    - i. Work group is working on the third draft of the communication plan
    - ii. Should be done by next implementation meeting
  - c. Work group added a summer activity list to the Just In Time site
- 10. Child Welfare work group reported on their progress**
  - a. The creation of a Partnership Plan was discussed
    - i. This will be an agreement between the caseworkers and the caregivers
  - b. Discussed the creation of a Child Transition Survey
    - i. It is designed to capture child specific details that travel with the child
    - ii. Asked if we are concerned about very negative responses to the survey being passed along to the next home
      - 1. No, it is all in how the survey is presented
  - c. The work group is working on developing three hundred sixty degree (360) reviews
    - i. They will allow foster parents to provide feedback on caseworker and vice versa
    - ii. This should be done in the next few months
  - d. The work group is also looking at respite and disruption data
    - i. With a ten (10) day notice, it requires Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings prior to a disruption
      - 1. The work group discovered this was not being done and they are looking to make this mandatory
      - 2. Asked if the requirement of the CFT is going to be a written policy for DFS
        - a. Yes
    - ii. The exit survey hopefully will help with the disruptions
    - iii. The work group is hoping to make it a bit harder to complete a disruption
    - iv. DFS needs to make better matches and the work group hopes this exit survey will help with that
  - e. The work group is working on a document that will clearly outline what information the caseworker can share with caregivers
- 11. Christina Vela, Manager Family Services, presented documents for review**
  - a. Discussed what is really important about this next phase of the QPI process
    - i. It is the implementation phase
    - ii. Work groups put together initiatives and then they move them up to the Implementation team
    - iii. It isn't as simple as just putting it on paper

- iv. It has to have a strategic plan for implementing it
- b. The Child Welfare work group has created the Child Transition Survey
  - i. The document was reviewed by attendees
  - ii. A conversation about how to implement it was held
    - 1. There are both internal and external implementation areas
  - iii. The survey is in two (2) parts
    - 1. They are the instructions and the actual survey
  - iv. The document was created to help our kids
  - v. Noted that having a child move from place to place is traumatic
  - vi. There is information that needs to be transitioned with the child
  - vii. A list of future doctor's appointments will be part of the survey
  - viii. The hope is that the foster parent complete the form
  - ix. DFS Receiving staff can use the survey when there are unexpected drop offs
    - 1. It has been used already on unexpected drop offs
    - 2. So far, the response was good
  - x. Asked if this is being administered monthly as indicated on the document
    - 1. Not actually and the form will be edited to clarify that
  - xi. It can be used as a tool for the caseworker's visits to convey pertinent information
  - xii. It will be included in the medical passport
  - xiii. Hopefully, it will give the next foster parent a head start
  - xiv. DFS' goal is to reduce the number of placements per child
  - xv. Asked is the survey geared toward the disruption being due to the child's behavior
    - 1. Suggested perhaps there needs to questions that address the reason for the disruption
    - 2. Suggested perhaps the last two (2) questions should be a separate sheet
    - 3. This could also include areas that deals with the specifics of why the disruption is happening
  - xvi. Asked should this mimic the Placement Request and Disclosure (PRD) form
    - 1. This would serve as a supplemental item to the PRD
    - 2. Suggested perhaps this can be used as a format to change the PRD
  - xvii. It was modeled after DFS Permanency Department and the forms they use on a monthly basis
  - xviii. The caseworker should have this information in their notes
  - xix. It should be consistently used by the caseworker and there should be a history for the child
  - xx. The last two (2) questions will give us lots of information about attrition

- xxi. Asked if the diagnosis, if there is one, should be added
  - xxii. The form was created to make sure that there was a document that would be able travel with the child
  - xxiii. It is in response to an immediate problem
  - xxiv. It was created to make this as easy as possible for the child
  - xxv. This will formalize a process that has been informal thus far
  - xxvi. Rather than give the information verbally it would be in writing
  - xxvii. The form doesn't take away the responsibility of the caseworker to go to the home
  - xxviii. Suggested providing a frequently asked question (FAQ) document for staff and caregivers regarding the survey
  - xxix. Suggested adding a training about its use to Just In Time site
  - xxx. Suggested giving it to the foster parents prior to the CRT and have them bring it with so the team knows what is exactly going on with the placement
- c. Partnership Plan was discussed
- i. The group was tasked with taking a look at the document and providing feedback
  - ii. The state is looking to implement a partnership plan as well
  - iii. The draft of DFS' is modeled after Washoe's
  - iv. We are one of only three (3) states that are using these now
  - v. It is about us partnering so that we can provide quality care
  - vi. It can change the culture of DFS
  - vii. It is a big initiative
  - viii. The whole goal is that the caregivers are as smart and well prepared as DFS staff
  - ix. We all need to respect each other and share information
  - x. We all need to understand our roles
  - xi. We need to embody respect for each other
  - xii. We have to model good behavior for our kids
  - xiii. We need to treat each other like we want our kids to treat others
    - 1. We have to admit and understand we don't always see things from the same prospective
  - xiv. If the people involved in the system don't understand each other it creates issues
  - xv. The intent behind the plan is to lay out a set of expectations, that everyone will agree to, that will create a loving environment for our kids
  - xvi. There are several sections to the agreement
    - 1. Respected partners
    - 2. Safe children
    - 3. What supports can we put in place so that kids can participate in normal activities
    - 4. Healthy families

5. Care and communities

6. How do we support natural family connections for the kids

- d. Asked should we call them natural, biological or birth families
  - i. A vote was taken among the attendees
  - ii. Birth family was chosen
  - iii. Mentioned that Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) refers to them as natural
  - iv. We are looking to align our language
- e. The intent of the document is that it would be reviewed between the case manager and the caregiver each time there is a placement
- f. Asked how do we “be” about this
  - i. We can’t proceed unless we are prepared to commit to it
- g. It tells people what the expectations are on both sides
- h. There would be details about who takes the kids to the doctor and how to interact with the birth parents
- i. Stated clarifications are so important
- j. It will only work if there is a lengthy discussion about the document between the case worker and the caregiver
- k. The three hundred and sixty degree (360) reviews are going to be important
- l. “How were you as a case worker and were you a good partner” should be part of the three hundred and sixty degree (360) reviews
- m. Asked how do we roll this out
  - i. An implementation plan will be created
  - ii. Training will be created
  - iii. Suggested a mixer where staff and foster parents come together to discuss the agreement
  - iv. Noted everything is about relationships
  - v. We need to understand each other’s “why”
- n. The document will solidify what is taught in the Permanence and Safety Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP) trainings
- o. It will also be a tool to refer back to when issues come up
- p. Caution should be exercised to not use it as an accountability document
  - i. It’s a reminder to people as to how they need to be with each other
  - ii. It is not about making someone wrong
- q. Mentioned that it may create an issue regarding case workers’ time management skills
  - i. This isn’t something new to do
  - ii. It’s how you do what you have to do
- r. The document won’t be an isolated document
- s. It’s about changing the culture of fostering
- t. Confidentiality is a huge issue because it isn’t consistent from case worker to case worker

- i. The tool that needs to be included will contain specifics about what case managers can share with the caregivers
      - ii. We have to be careful as to how and what we share with caregivers about the birth family
    - u. It mimics our vision for fostering
    - v. Mentioned the language for item number two (2) is limiting
      - i. Suggested that be revised to be more open
- 12.** Next meeting will be August 26, 2014 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
  - a. Location to be determined at a later date