



Clark County Department of Family Services

Child Welfare Services Workgroup

March 24, 2015

Present

Mark Fitzgerald, DFS Co-Lead
Denise Parker, DFS QPI
Dianne Brooks, Foster Parent
Patricia Nordstrom, DFS Foster Parent Liaison
Brenda Herbstman, DFS
Leigh Anne Westenkirchner, DFS Permanency
Aja Staniszewski, Foster Parent & Community Partner
Katrin Easter, DFS Permanency

Agenda

- Welcome / Introductions
- Custody Letter
- Partnership Plan – Training & Passport to Partnership
- Information Sharing
- Respite
- Normalcy
- Transitions
- Visitation
- Other

Minutes

The QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup welcomed new team members and encouraged their involvement.

1. Custody Letter

- There is a new policy regarding the custody agreement. The new letter/form allows travel with case manager's knowledge. Some of the courts are adding "cannot travel" on PC status documents. On 3/30/15, there will be a discussion with the courts to amend this
- Some case managers do not feel comfortable with the new policy and are telling caregivers that they are not allowed to travel while in PC status and without their permission. Denise will follow-up with supervisors at the All-Sups meeting.
- This policy is being adopted throughout the state.

2. Partnership Plan

- Mark is working on training for those who don't attend the Passport to Partnership event on May 11th & 12th.
- Also to be discussed at the Passport to Partnership will be Caregiver IDs with the associated discounts for foster families from Foster Friends and Information sharing about QPI Initiatives. The main focus will be on the Partnership Agreement.
- Caregivers who do not attend will receive their IDs at their annual license renewal. They will be sent out initially with licenses and then reissued annually.

3. Information Sharing

- Washoe is looking at sharing drug testing results, not levels, but positive or negative status results. Clark County is looking at that change too.
- This topic is going to the next level of the approval process. It should be with the Policy Unit this week, then following that process. Denise will be presenting it at the Leadership Meeting next week.

4. Respite

- The plan is to continue sharing information on respite philosophies with newly licensed caregivers.

5. Normalcy

- There is a statewide committee workgroup that has started. The Prudent Parenting legislature is moving forward in bill form right now. Washoe has developed policies for families, for relatives and for agencies regarding normalcy and what that looks like for each of those categories.
- Denise will cross-walk the Washoe Policy with the Prudent Parenting document. If there are no problems or discrepancies between them,

Denise will take the document to the Statewide Committee and the draft will go back to the Child Welfare Workgroup in approximately 2 months

- This process makes staff nervous. For example: overnight visits with peers – how do staff ensure that kids are safe when you don't know anything about the family that they are going to be spending the night with.
- This process and how it will be documented needs to be looked at further to see which items/concerns need to be considered.
- Creating partnerships with caregivers, birth parents, and case managers, rather than confrontational situations will be key to this initiative. Working together is important and partnership will need to be the focus of the decision making process.
 - Next steps: Give feedback to Denise on this policy to bring to workgroups. Focus on any issues you foresee in any of the discussed areas
 - Add a driving policy for IL that covers liability and insurance
- Last bullet point on this documents states that caregivers have to justify how caregivers applied the Prudent Parenting Standards – who will be determining the validity of the justifications?
- Documentation will be important for all team members. Caregivers can document incidents and send emails to workers. Visitation can document too. Caregivers can ask them to check for bruises or situations with parents. If a staff member does not want to document a situation, caregivers should ask to speak to a supervisor.
- Policies will help guide what is happening but is not being interpreted consistently. Child Welfare Team can bring up these topics and start working item by item to clear up inconsistencies.

6. Transitions

- Dr. Zeneah will be here 3/30/15 with the judges to discuss attachments, transitions and purposeful visitations. He will interweave previous feedback from the other sessions. Panel discussion in the afternoon will discuss consistency throughout the process for everyone.
- One Judge One Family – initiative was brought forward by the Blue Ribbon Panel. It may or may not be in the report, but Judge Sullivan recommended trying to decrease ratios of cases to judges by hiring 2 or 3 judges to help them accomplish their goals. The Blue Ribbon Panel report may be released on Friday.
- One goal of the Dr. Zeneah training will be to make sure people understand that we need to be child centered and provide thoughtful transitions. Workers and Supervisors need to plan for transitions at CFTs. The goal is to have a process that will go into policy for all case managers.

- Transitions, communications and consistency are important to this goal. This will also be a statewide issue to promote consistent transitions.

7. Legislature

- There are a number of bills going forward during this session. AB247 – changes how foster care works. The implications are training hours going to 40 hours for relative and non-relative caregivers before licensure. This includes ICPC placements also. The bill states that there are 12 training topics which are not currently included in the MAPP training. The first designated training is on Medicare. The impact of this bill will be on recruitment and retention. The bill will also increase renewal training hours to 20. Educational issues are also addressed in the bill as well as a requirement that all caregivers will have to submit a report on the child annually or they will be fined.
- Denise will be at a meeting on Friday with leadership. If there are areas you would like her to discuss, please let her know.
- Bill 303 – Rights of the Child versus Parental rights. At what point does the parent no longer get additional time to complete their case plan. If there is no progress on their case plan after 1 year – the case should move forward to permanency/TPR. Please let Denise know if you know of a caregiver that would like to testify on behalf of this bill.
- Prudent Parenting Bill – this version is generic enough for interpretations among the counties so that each community may develop what is best for their population.

The next meeting of the QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup will be on Tuesday, April 28, 2015 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at DFS Central Site, 121 S. Martin Luther King Blvd. in the Lincoln Room.