



Clark County Department of Family Services

Child Welfare Workgroup

Meeting Minutes from Date

March 25, 2014

Present

Mark Fitzgerald, DFS co-lead
Denise Parker, DFS, QPI Coordinator
Lani Aitken, DFS
Mike Pochowski, Foster Parent
Jane Green, DFS
Cheryl Shuberda, DFS
Pamela Egan, Foster Parent
Brigid Duffy, District Attorney
Dianne P. Brooks, Foster Parent

Agenda

- Exit Survey
- 10 Day Notices and “drop offs”
- Report on Review of “White Papers” as to Information Sharing with Caregivers
- Normalcy
- Review of the Proposed Clark County Partnership Plan for Children in Out-of-Home Care
- 360 degree Reviews of Caseworkers and Caregivers
- Discussion around future training

Minutes

1. The workgroup reviewed and discussed the changes made to the Caregiver Survey
 - The genesis, evolution, and purpose of the Caregiver Survey was revisited with the workgroup
 - The workgroup membership present was pleased with the formatting and with the information captured in the Caregiver Survey
 - The workgroup discussed the process of beginning to use the Caregiver Survey on a limited (“pilot”) basis with the Placement and Emergency Placement (Receiving) Team representatives present

Next meeting content:

- Cheryl will, with her Supervisor, create a “workflow,” to determine the best utilization, distribution and return on the Caregiver Surveys
- Cheryl will provide the “workflow” to Denise Parker who will meet with Executive Management with Mark Fitzgerald and Alison Caliendo to discuss
- Cheryl, Denise and Mark will report back at the next QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup

2. The workgroup was provided additional information around “10 day notices” and “drop offs” (those children returned to DFS care absent the “10 day notice”).

- Denise provided statistics indicating (corrected) that 864 individual children experienced a disruption last year (including no notices and 10 day notices). 157 of the disruptions were “not reasons acceptable to give no notice.” This represents 17% of the children in care. 8 of the caregiver families were “repeat offenders” (resulting in 24 disruptions, 6 were DFS families and 2 were agency families.
- The workgroup expressed collective concern and discussed strategies to address including exploring putting “holds” on the licenses until there is a conversation with the caregiver. Diane stated that in Colorado where she was previously a foster parent, a “10 day notice” was not as easy to submit as here locally, and that upon submitting one a “hold” was placed on the license and you received “training” to the particular issue. Mike added that DFS could work with the caregivers about exploring what types of children their knowledge, skills and abilities support them in being able to competently care for.
- Jane indicated that there are policies around CFTs being conducted to explore methods to prevent disruption when a 10 day notice is submitted which is not consistently adhered to.
- The workgroup discussed including an article about 10 day notices and “drop offs” in the Caregiver Courier as well as in the DFS Newsletter for staff which would focus on these numbers and what disruption means to the children

Next meeting content:

- Jane will forward the existing policies around “10 day notices” and “drop offs” to Denise
- Denise will compile the existing policies around “10 day notices” and “drop offs” and present back to the workgroup for the next scheduled meeting and discussion

3. Report back and discussion of the review of the “White Papers”
- Brigid Duffy, District Attorney, graciously reviewed all three versions of the “White Papers” provided including California, Florida, and Washoe County and discussed each. Brigid stated her own thoughts were more in line with the California version which was much more comprehensive. She provided information about certain information prohibited from being shared due to HIPPA (for example drug test results of the parents, treatment results and the parents and mental health conditions of the parents)
 - Mark cited Mike and Maryann Pochowski’s embracing of their “mentorship” role with birth parents which has included working with them directly in their home and the need to know information about the parents which could impact decisions around if this is safe to do, e.g. have the parents relapsed and are they actively using, is their mental health condition unstable, etc.
 - Brigid cited reference in the California version which talks about securing birth parent consent to include caregivers as recipients of this type of information and/or securing a Court Order based on the “need to know” as indicated above.
 - Mark noted that the Florida version was more abbreviated and perhaps more easily digestible to DFS staff and caregivers.
 - Mark reminded the Workgroup that two of the strategies currently existing for caregivers to get information about birth parents is through attending Court, for which by law they should receive notice in certified mail, and through attending CFTs although invitation is not currently mandated.
 - Mark advised that stronger language endorsing the mandatory inclusion of caregivers in CFTs citing their critical and supportive was previously sent to Manager Christina Vela who is rewriting Permanency P & Ps.
 - The workgroup agreed that caregivers are not routinely receiving certified notification of Court Hearings and some are not receiving any notification.

Next meeting content:

- Brigid and Denise will work with the California “White Paper” to make it more readable and to incorporate Nevada legal citations, etc.
- Brigid and Denise will present a proposed Nevada “White Paper” to DFS Executive Management for review, consideration and input
- Mark and Denise will participate in a conference call on April 3, 2014 whereupon there will be “statewide” discussion around a “White Paper” encompassing the State of Nevada

- Brigid will be involved in the process as Clark County's legal representative and engage in discussion with her legal partners across the State
- Brigid and Denise will report back to the workgroup a proposed Nevada "White Paper" for further review and discussion

4. Normalcy

- Denise introduced the topic of "Normalcy" for children in care and discussed a "subgroup" of the Child Welfare Services Workgroup that she has put together with various representatives (DFS, birth parent, foster parent, teen in care, etc). Some ideas of where the caregiver would like to be able to act as a "prudent parent" in making decisions for the children under their care include out of county/state travel and granting permission for sports activities.
- Denise advised that Washoe County is already working on "Normalcy"
- Denise advised that the plan would be to attempt to include legislation within the Childrens' Bill of Rights

Next Meeting Content:

- Denise will report back to the QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup and solicit additional information, comments, and thoughts on an ongoing basis

5. Partnership Plan

- Denise provided the "Partnership Plan for Children in Out-of-Home Care" to the Workgroup (previously e-mailed) and requested additional input, some of which has already been incorporated.

Next Meeting Content:

- Denise and Mark will continue to reach out to solicit input
- Denise and Mark will introduce this to DFS Executive Management upon input and approval of the QPI Child Welfare Workgroup
- Denise and DFS Executive Management will discuss the "Partnership Plan for Children in Out-of-Home Care" at a statewide level through the DMG (Decision-Making Group)
- Denise and Mark will continue to update the QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup as to the above

6. Review of Caregiver and Case Worker 360 degree Surveys

- Denise emphasized the importance of the surveys in 360 degree accountability to the QPI Brand
- Denise is seeking input on the documents

Next Meeting Content:

- The QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup Members will review the Caregiver and Caseworker Surveys prior to the next meeting and provide Denise any suggested enhancements, etc. via e-mail
- The QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup will discuss the surveys and their utility at the next meeting
- The QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup will discuss what implementation might look like

7. Discussion Around Training Presentation

- Mark briefly discussed a proposed “training curriculum” and what that would encompass emanating from the excellent work of the QPI Child Welfare Services Workgroup. The “training curriculum” is found on the Nevada “Just in Time” Website.
- Mark discussed in generalities what the objective of the training would be (promoting the message of partnership with caregivers, inclusiveness, and consistency), who would be the target audience would be (all DFS staff), who would be the trainers (DFS and caregivers), and how to reach out to caregivers with this information (maybe post on Just in Time website.
- DFS Training Team has a designated representative assigned to this project

Next Meeting Content;

- This will be discussed in future meetings

Next Meeting:

The meeting is the fourth Tuesday of the month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the DFS Main Office located at 121 S. Martin Luther King Blvd. For April 29, 2014 the meeting will be from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Carson City Room.