



# Clark County Department of Family Services

## Support and Retention Workgroup Meeting

Meeting Minutes from May 8, 2014 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

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### Present

Richard Egan (Nevada Health and Human Services), Mike Pochowski (Foster Parent),  
Karlene Ulibarri (Bountiful Family Services)

DFS Staff - Lani Aiken, Virgil Clark, Krystal Davis, Denise Parker, Shannon Rooney

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### Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Meeting Minutes from 4/10/14
3. Survey
4. Update on Mediation or review board
5. Grievance Policy/Ombudsman
6. License closure update 2013
7. Strategic plan
8. Other

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### Minutes

#### Meeting Content:

1. Greetings and introductions were made
2. Discussed minutes from the last meeting
  - a. No questions from the group
3. The Caregiver Survey was discussed
  - a. The survey is at the point of being able to move forward
  - b. No more revisions are being made
  - c. The English version has been loaded into Survey Monkey
  - d. It's been approved by Department of Family Services (DFS) Management
  - e. It has been sent for translation to Spanish
    - i. Translation will be done by May 12, 2014

- f. It is ready to be tested
  - i. DFS will be getting a few foster families to take it to see how long it actually takes to complete
  - ii. Need to have it sent out to the work group for testing
  - iii. Work group members were instructed to answer “yes” to the first question so they can complete the survey
  - iv. Work group members were also asked to answer “other” to question two (2) and put “BETA TEST” in the comment section unless they are foster parents
  - v. Work group members were also tasked with timing the survey so we can give accurate times to the caregivers
  - vi. Work group members will be sent an email with the survey access information attached
- g. Denise Parker, Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) Coordinator, informed the group that the Thank You Certificate packages going out to foster families will also include the announcement regarding the coming survey
- h. Foster parent email addresses have been updated
  - i. Special Projects Unit estimates about seventy percent (70%) have been updated
  - ii. As a result, DFS will be able to get the survey to more homes
- i. Gift card distribution was discussed
  - i. DFS is considering ordering twenty-five (25) of each type of gift card
  - ii. Signatures must be received at the time the gift card is given to the caregivers
  - iii. Caregivers will be able to come to the DFS Central location to pick gift cards up
  - iv. Special Projects Unit (SPU) staff will be at the Visitation Center for a week with laptops and caregivers will be able to take the survey there and get their gift cards
    - 1. There will be a list that will be maintained that will have staff checking off who has picked up gift cards
    - 2. DFS will advertise staff being on site prior to the week they will be there at the Visitation Center
    - 3. The group was asked if one (1) week of being on site was enough or if two (2) were needed
      - a. The group agreed that two (2) weeks were needed
    - 4. Suggested due to the number of foster parents using the Visitation Center, this might prohibit getting the whole group serviced
    - 5. Suggested that we check with the Visitation Center as to how many foster parents use the center and what their busiest hours and days are

- v. Suggested that there be a card created with a reminder to go home and take the survey which will include the web address for the survey
  - vi. Suggested posting the web address on the bulletin board at the Visitation Center
  - vii. Noted the more DFS pushes for people to take the survey, it shows the caregivers DFS is very interested in hearing from them
  - viii. Suggested that we put the web address for the survey on the Just In Time web site
  - ix. Suggested that agencies having events can have caregivers do the survey and pick up their gift cards there
    - 1. SPU can send staff out to help
  - j. Asked if the surveys are per person or per household
    - i. The general thought was that it was best if it was per household but it wouldn't be horrible if each parent in the household filled out a survey
    - ii. We won't be turning people away
  - k. Suggested that we coordinate with DFS Receiving as caregivers sometimes have a wait when there
    - i. Suggested putting the cards with the web address there
  - l. Noted that the cards must be in English and Spanish
  - m. The survey timeline was discussed
    - i. Spanish version should be ready on May 12, 2014
    - ii. Once the Spanish version is received, it will be put into Survey Monkey
    - iii. The Survey Monkey entry should be completed within two (2) weeks or tentatively by May 26, 2014
    - iv. Suggested sending the survey out the first two (2) weeks in June
    - v. SPU staff will be at the Visitation Center the following two (2) weeks
    - vi. Target date of May 27, 2014 was chosen for starting to distribute the survey
    - vii. Weeks of June 9 and 16, 2014 identified as the weeks for SPU staff at the Visitation Center
  - n. Noted that no changes can be made to the survey once it is sent out
  - o. Suggested that we take into consideration the end of the school year coming up
    - i. We may get a larger number of participants after school lets out for the summer
  - p. Whoever is going to staff the Visitation Center needs to really market the survey and talk it up
  - q. Shannon Rooney will reach out to the Visitation Center for approval to have SPU staff on site
4. Grievance policy update was given

- a. Denise has been researching the DFS policy
  - b. There is a process that exists but no one knows what it is and it isn't working
  - c. Once we fully understand the policy, it needs to be communicated to everyone
  - d. When an issue is a case specific, it needs to go through the Ombudsman's Office
  - e. When the issue is general, it needs to go through Children's Alliance
  - f. If it hasn't been resolved at Children's Alliance, they have been sending them to the Just In Time web site
  - g. Whatever the policy becomes, it needs to be more constructive
  - h. Suggested that we look at the Citizen's Review Board
  - i. Discussed the idea of having a third, non-involved, party involved in the decision making
  - j. Suggested that we schedule a meeting with Children's Alliance and the Ombudsman
    - i. Karlene Ulibarri will set up the meeting
  - k. The policy should be clear on how to handle trends and individual issues
  - l. DFS staff not answering phone calls is an ongoing issue
  - m. DFS has to do more to make changes when issues are brought up
  - n. There needs to be trainings around the paradigm shift DFS and QPI are trying to create
  - o. DFS staff has to recognize that changes don't necessarily have to reflect on staffs' positions
  - p. DFS management is very dedicated to making changes
  - q. There needs to be accountability for DFS staff
  - r. Asked what the end goal and next steps are with regard to the grievance policy
    - i. Next step is to set up the meeting with Children's Alliance and the Ombudsman
    - ii. We need to locate the policy that is currently in existence
    - iii. That policy will need to be revised
    - iv. Training needs to be developed and implemented
5. Discussed license closures
- a. DFS had a large number of kids at Child Haven and that prompted the work group to look at the data
  - b. In 2013 there were one hundred and eighty-six (186) closures
    - i. Twenty-two percent (22%) were homes that only wanted to adopt
    - ii. Forty-five percent (45%) were due to attrition
    - iii. One hundred and one (101) families were multiple offenders of dropping children off at Child Haven without warning
  - c. Licensing is calling the forty-five percent (45%) that closed due to attrition, doing a survey as to why they closed and asking them if they want to come back

- d. DFS will also be doing the survey with the one hundred and one (101) closures, less the number DFS closed
  - e. DFS is looking for trends as to why families are leaving fostering
  - f. DFS is also going back to the first quarter of 2014 as we lost fifteen (15) licenses as a net
    - i. If that rate of closures keeps up, DFS is heading toward forty-five (45) net loss for the year
  - g. There needs to be consistency in how information is input when someone closes out a license on UNITY
    - i. The language needs to be precise
    - ii. There were a lot of closures on UNITY that were back dated
    - iii. The number of closures is now correct in UNITY
    - iv. DFS Licensing is working on this now and should be done by the end of this week
  - h. Denise will look at the data and look for trends and will report back to the group as to how we can be supportive of our caregivers
    - i. Not everyone will have the same needs
    - ii. DFS needs to target the specifics that families need
    - iii. DFS needs to be able to assess what the needs are
  - i. The work group will then suggest a standard for the employees so that there is consistency
    - i. DFS caseworkers are overloaded, but they will need to be held to quality standards
  - j. There are going to be a lot of teachable moments between this group's survey and the one licensing is staffing
6. Commented if DFS wants to retain the quality parents, they need to let them know about what is happening with the QPI process
- a. Implementation Team meeting is May 13, 2014
    - i. That meeting is where foster parents can get this information
    - ii. Co-Lead meeting outlined which items the Co-Leads will be informing the public about
    - iii. There are at least six (6) initiatives that management has given approval for
    - iv. There will also be an opportunity for the public to give input as to next objectives for the work groups to focus on
  - b. Suggested that the caseworkers be provided with details as to what QPI is doing and be able to discuss it with the foster parents during home visits
  - c. Communication work group is currently being tasked with developing a strategic plan for internal and external communications
  - d. Foster parents and workers all need to be aware of QPI
  - e. QPI is a process and a mind shift and won't be understood immediately
    - i. It all goes back to quality parenting
    - ii. It is a way of being
    - iii. It is what we expect for our kids

- iv. It will bring change
- 7. Asked if there was anything else that the group would like to work on
  - a. Mentor program was suggested
    - i. This is different than the Foster Parent Champions Program
    - ii. Suggested that we wait to work on this until after we get the details from the survey results
      - 1. Can't assess where the needs are until then
- 8. Next Meeting June 12, 2014