



Message from Randy Hart, CA Deputy Assistant Secretary

The excitement in the agency and in communities is growing! Family Assessment Response (FAR) is the change in our CPS model that our staff has wanted to make for a long time. Improving families' lives in a non-adversarial way is what social work is all about.

Both FAR and Investigations are necessary for our agency to have the best CPS response to families in crisis. Implementing FAR will allow investigators to focus on high risk allegations of abuse and neglect, while increasing community supports available to lower risk families.

Research from other states that have implemented differential response systems similar to FAR have demonstrated positive outcomes, particularly in terms of sustained child safety, improved family engagement, increased community involvement, and enhanced worker satisfaction. Child safety has not been compromised and those areas have experienced a reduced recurrence of child abuse and neglect.

Other areas that have implemented a child-centered and family-centered differential response have found that the family-focused community-based program values have been a catalyst for agency-wide culture changes that embrace families and communities as true partners in child protection.

The first phase of FAR is scheduled to begin on January 1, 2014, in the following offices:

- Spokane (Zip codes 99201 and 99207)
- Lynnwood
- Aberdeen

The second phase of FAR is scheduled to begin implementation in July 2014, in the following offices:

- Spokane (Zip codes 99205, 99217, and Lincoln County)
- Ellensburg
- Mount Vernon
- Martin Luther King Jr.
- Pierce East
- Stevenson



Randy Hart

Schedule of Coming Events

November 2013

- Pre-view session of FAR training for supervisors and AAs

December 2013

- December 2-6: FAR Training for Phase 1 Offices
- December 11: Leadership Forum
- TriWest Contracted Evaluator: Evaluation plan complete

January 2014

- Phase 1 offices begin FAR
- Phase 2 planning for FAR



**For more information about FAR,
please contact:**

Regional Leads

Region 1 Julie Ellis: (509) 363-3495

Region 2 Kara Rozeboom: (425) 673-3113

Region 3 Anita Teeter: (360) 725-6807

Headquarters Leads

Dawn Cooper: (360) 902-8469

Jeanne McShane: (360) 902-7858

FamLink changes related to FAR

On October 20, 2013, Children's Administration changed the intake tool in FamLink to include a Structured Decision Making decision tree that will help intake identify which CPS cases meet the requirements for investigation and which are appropriate for FAR.

We will monitor these numbers to make sure we have allocated staff appropriately at the initial sites and to help us better estimate the number of staff we will need for offices that will begin using FAR in the future.

We do not anticipate any immediate changes to Family Voluntary Services (FVS) cases. Initially, none of the FVS staff will be reallocated for FAR. Management will continue to monitor caseload sizes for FAR, investigations and FVS to make sure that cases are appropriately dispersed.

How will FAR be staffed?



The success of Family Assessment Response (FAR) depends on staffing in CPS investigations and FAR to meet the needs of the families we serve.

Children's Administration reviewed other states' data and our own intake data to estimate the number of cases that will be assigned to FAR. We estimate approximately 65 percent of CPS intakes will be assigned to FAR when it is implemented statewide. We are using that estimate to project the number of staff we will need to implement FAR in the offices that will begin using the program in January.

Some CPS investigative staff will be reallocated to respond to FAR intakes. In the 2013 legislative session, Children's Administration received some funding for additional caseworkers to be assigned to FAR. We used the number of intakes received in fiscal year 2012 to determine how to allocate those workers. Spokane received six, Lynnwood received three and Aberdeen received two additional social workers to implement FAR. We will continue to assess staffing needs in other offices as FAR goes statewide.

FAR FAQ

What is the difference between FAR and FVS?

ANSWER: Family Assessment Response is a Child Protective Services Response. Families with intakes that meet the screening criteria for CPS will either receive an investigation or a FAR response. Families involved in Investigative cases that need in-home services can still transfer to Family Voluntary Services. Families involved with FAR will complete an assessment with the FAR worker to identify services and community supports that will help them keep their children safe. FAR families will continue to work with their FAR caseworker to access services.

How will we manage any increase in intakes reported as FAR is implemented?

ANSWER: We do not expect to see an increase in intakes reported to CA and screened-in for CPS response. CA leadership currently monitors intake trends at the state, regional and local level. We will continue to closely monitor intake numbers as FAR is implemented. FAR intakes must still meet the screening criteria for a CPS response as described in Washington State law (RCW 26.44).



Veteran Parents See Benefits for Families

Veteran parents, those who have been involved with the child welfare system in the past, were instrumental in getting legislation passed that paved the way for Family Assessment Response (FAR).

Veteran parents we talked to believe engaging families in a new way will reduce the number of children in care, helping more parents to address the challenges that make it difficult to keep their children safe at home.

Andrew Farris, a veteran parent from Spokane, has high hopes for FAR. Mr. Farris believes the community engagement part of FAR will lead to "a more holistic approach to family issues that we all have, that sometimes get out of control." He said his experience with the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) created "a false reality ... You still have to go back to the life you had before DCFS was involved."

Mr. Farris described building a life around DCFS involvement and services that gave him and his family tremendous external motivation. He said he spent more than 25 hours a week in services while he was involved with DCFS, "and I was succeeding. There were so many people standing around me patting my back. In real life there is no one to provide the external motivation to that extent ... There was a huge gap from what I received from DCFS and what I had after they were gone." Mr. Farris said he believes involving families with their communities can be a real support after DCFS no longer is involved.

continued on next page

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Each edition of this newsletter will feature thoughts on the program from someone working on FAR



Kimberley Ripley
FAR Office Lead, Lynnwood Office

I am excited to be a part of FAR because I believe in the guiding principles behind Family Assessment Response. I'm very excited to see an alternative pathway for low to moderate risk CPS cases. The research from other states who have already implemented an alternative response program like FAR is very promising. I'm delighted to be a member of the FAR implementation group.

I am excited to offer more front end preventative services that will provide families the opportunity to improve the outcomes for their children.



Stephanie Frazier
FAR Office Lead, Aberdeen Office



Erik Larson
FAR Office Lead, Spokane Office

"I am enthusiastic about FAR coming on board. I believe this program will change the way we do social work in Children's Administration. I am also passionate about connecting our great community with Children's Administration and building a stronger, safer community. I am excited to be in on the ground floor of building up this terrific program."

Thank you Kimberley, Stephanie,
and Erik for your dedication to
Children, Families and FAR!

continued from previous page

Mr. Farris said he is watching the community come together to develop FAR in Spokane, one of three places where we will begin rolling it out in 2014. He thinks Spokane is becoming a place "where we can transition to a holistic support system for the whole community, even beyond FAR. We are in a really unique place to help all of our families be more successful."

Spokane is becoming a place "where we can transition to a holistic support system for the whole community, even beyond FAR. We are in a really unique place to help all of our families be more successful."

Veteran parent Gina Enochs was involved with Child Protective Services (CPS) and dependency court in 2006 and 2009. The first time she was

involved with CPS, Ms. Enochs said she "felt like I was alone. Like it was me against the world. I couldn't tell anyone I was using. No one gave me hope. I felt hopeless and alone." Ms. Enochs said that she continued to go deeper into her addiction and eventually relinquished parental rights to her son.

In 2009, she became involved with CPS again. Her CPS worker connected her to the "Life During CPS support group" run by a group of local veteran parents. Ms. Enochs said because of the support they provided, "I didn't feel alone. I learned it was OK for me to ask for resources – I wasn't scared because I was working with people I could trust." Ms. Enochs is working closely with the Lynnwood office to get ready for FAR. She was on the interview panel that selected the Lynnwood staff and is excited to work with FAR social workers to help families stay together. She said that she feels FAR will be good for families like hers because the case workers will meet with families to seek solutions. Ms. Enochs said, "The FAR worker will come out and say something like, 'I want to talk with you about how we can work together to keep your kids safe.'"

Once you choose hope, anything's possible. ~ Christopher Reeve

Kempe Center Consultation

Participants in a recent consultation on Family Assessment Response (FAR) walked away with a better understanding of the work ahead as we implement FAR in Washington State.

Casey Family Programs hosted the day-long event, attended by 26 participants from Children's Administration, Casey Family Programs, Empire Health Foundation, the University of Washington Alliance, Partners for Our Children and the state Attorney General's Office.

Amy Hahn, Senior Instructor with the Colorado Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect, presented lessons other states using FAR have learned and facilitated discussion on the topic. Ms. Hahn leads the National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response. She provided a wealth of valuable FAR information.

We hope to bring Ms. Hahn back to Washington soon to share her expertise and to help managers and supervisors lead the cultural shift that will accompany the FAR rollout.

CPS RESPONSES

CPS Investigations

- 24-and 72-hour responses
 - All sexual abuse and exploitation
 - High risk physical abuse
 - Crimes
 - Subjects identified
- Children may be interviewed before notifying parents
- Complete investigative assessment
 - Findings

All CPS Investigations and FAR

- Focus on child safety
- Focus on child well being
- Promote permanency
- Use Solution Based casework for family assessment and engagement
- Assess risk using structured decision making tool

CPS Family Assessment Response

- 72-hour response
- Low risk physical abuse
- Low to moderate neglect
- No subjects identified
 - Voluntary-families can choose FAR or an investigation
- Request parent permission to interview children
 - Children may be interviewed with their parents present
- Completes FAR Family Assessment
 - No findings

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

*Nelson Mandela,
former president of South Africa*



Thanks, Partners!

Thanks to our philanthropic partners, Casey Family Programs, the Empire Health Foundation and the Giddens Foundation, Children's Administration staff visited Ohio, Utah and Minnesota to get a first-hand look at how those states are using Family Assessment Response and the lessons they have learned so far.

Several themes have emerged:

- A 25 percent reduction in out-of-home care.
- A 10 percent reduction in repeat reports of child maltreatment after FAR intervention has occurred.
- No changes in the number of child fatalities.
- No changes in caseload numbers.
- A high level of staff satisfaction.
- Less staff turnover.
- Communities are partnering with public child welfare providers to keep children safely at their homes.

The information we've gathered is invaluable to us as we plan for implementation of FAR in Washington State.

