



FAR has arrived!

After 21 months of planning and preparation, Family Assessment Response (FAR) is operating in three Washington cities. Spokane, Aberdeen, and Lynnwood began accepting FAR cases on January 1, 2014. This milestone gives us a lot to celebrate:

- FAR is on time and on budget.
- We have worked with internal and external partners in new ways.
- We have engaged veteran parents to help us develop a program that resonates with families who need FAR services.
- We have met new partners who are excited to help keep children safe.
- We are transforming the culture of child welfare.



We have had help from many partners to make FAR a reality, beginning with the support of Representative Ruth Kagi and Senator James Hargrove, who worked hard to pass the legislation that created FAR. We have worked with the federal government to receive flexible funding to support our efforts to change Child Protective Services. Our philanthropic partners support FAR, among them Casey Family Programs, the Empire Health Foundation and Verdant Health. The child welfare community also has helped us to develop this program. Led by Rep. Kagi and Children's Administration Assistant Secretary Jennifer Strus, the Title IV-E Advisory Committee has met quarterly to help us create a program that works for Washington families.

"We have had help from many partners to make FAR a reality"

Our outreach to local communities has increased our understanding that the Department cannot, and should not, work in isolation. Families need the support of their communities to be successful. We have reached out to those communities for help and their positive support has been overwhelming.

The first cases are coming in and we are ready! We have trained our staff, engaged communities and learned lessons from other states. Policies and procedures are drafted. Our outside evaluator, TriWest, is preparing to study the impact of FAR on Washington child welfare practice. Now the exciting, hard work of changing our service to children and their families begins.

Schedule of Coming Events

February 20, 2014

- Leadership Forum for Area Administrators

February 25 - 26, 2014

- Supervisor coaching/training – Spokane

February 27 - 28, 2014

- Supervisor coaching/training – Kent



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



Family Friendly Visitation Rooms - CA office chosen for Leadership Skagit Project

In December 2013, the Mount Vernon Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) office learned they were chosen for a community project sponsored by Leadership Skagit. From January through March 2014, six team members from Leadership Skagit will be raising money to update visitation rooms at the Mt Vernon office.

Leadership Skagit is a nine-month program through which participants gain an understanding of issues in Skagit County, resources available to address these issues, and unmet needs. They practice leadership skills including communication skills, teamwork, conflict resolution, and motivating groups to achieve goals. In addition to the course work, each participant in the program becomes part of a small team that plans, organizes and completes a service project. Leadership Skagit is offered through a partnership of the Economic Development Association of Skagit County, Skagit Valley College and Washington State University.

Shortly before Christmas, four members of the team toured the DCFS office to discuss how the visitation rooms might be improved. They observed two family visitations during the tour and asked the parents for their thoughts on the project. Some of the proposed ideas include:

- A TV on the lobby wall that plays parenting DVDs.
- New developmentally appropriate games, art projects, toys and puzzles stored in bins for parents to check out during visits.
- An area for teens waiting for placement with activities to check out (books, video games, journals, art supplies).
- A new changing table and furniture for the infant room with a music CD player.
- Rugs or play mats for the floors.
- Touch up paint on walls, artwork and furniture.

This is just one more way the Mount Vernon Office is building strong relationships with families and community partners in Skagit County.



FAR Word SEARCH



T	N	E	M	E	G	A	G	N	E	Y	R
S	T	R	B	J	K	C	H	I	L	D	E
S	C	S	O	W	A	X	B	I	F	V	K
E	M	E	R	P	D	Y	M	O	C	F	R
N	Z	C	N	I	U	A	P	Q	G	P	O
I	X	R	Q	C	F	O	N	E	A	D	W
D	R	U	S	S	I	Y	Z	R	B	K	L
A	E	O	Y	A	W	H	T	A	P	I	A
E	V	S	Z	V	U	N	Z	E	U	P	I
R	I	E	C	Z	E	F	R	T	F	Q	C
F	A	R	K	R	Q	X	Y	O	W	A	O
W	W	Y	T	I	N	U	M	M	O	C	S

Find the following words:

Child, Community, Engagement, Family, FAR, Partner, Pathway, Readiness, Resources, Safety First, Social Worker, Waiver

Empire Health Foundation Partners with Region 1 CA

Empire Health Foundation (EHF) works to improve the health of communities in eastern Washington.

EHF and Region 1 Children's Administration have developed a partnership that aligns organizational interests during the implementation of statewide reforms, including Family Assessment Response (FAR).



EHF seeks to impact policies and systems by investing in ideas and organizations that make our region measurably healthier. The Foundation's broad view of health allows it to support a large array of initiatives including healthcare access, obesity prevention, nonprofit capacity building, oral health, and health disparities. Another large focus of the Foundation is the mitigation and prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which is clearly aligned with the Children's Administration's current efforts to implement FAR. Initial Foundation support for FAR paid for several team members to travel to Minnesota to learn about a similar program in that state. We are excited to be working together for the common goals of better outcomes and improved overall health of the youth and families in this community.

The Foundation focuses on seven counties – Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln, Spokane, Adams and Whitman and is working on other health related initiatives in seven additional counties.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

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

I joined the Headquarters FAR team in June 2013. Prior to coming to FAR, I spent 25 years working for Children's Administration in Pierce County, the last 12 years as an Area Administrator.

"FAR offers another pathway ..."

CPS has always been my passion. Over the years it has become clear to me that not all families need an investigative approach. FAR offers another pathway that I believe will be a much better fit for families in which neglect and/or minor physical abuse are the issues. The FAR approach with families will be very different from traditional investigations. I am excited about the engagement piece, a core component of FAR. I have known and worked with many investigators who have been extremely skilled at engaging families. I have seen through their work how much engagement can positively affect the outcomes of investigations. It will be exciting to see this work happen in the context of FAR.

Community engagement is another core piece of our work in FAR. I have been amazed by how much communities want to partner with us to keep children safe. I have many hopes for FAR. If we are successful fewer children will be removed from their parents, child safety will not be compromised, and communities will work with us to keep children safe. Finally, CA staff will be more satisfied with the work they do, which in turn will reduce staff turnover. Ultimately, my hope is that FAR will change the culture of our agency as a whole. These hopes may seem a bit lofty, so I close with a quote I recently heard from one of our veteran parents ... "Hope is free."



Dawn Cooper
FAR Program Manager



FAR staff from Phase 1 Offices (Aberdeen, Spokane, and Lynnwood) and key staff from headquarters attended FAR training

FAR Staff Training – December 2-6, 2013

In preparation for the rollout of Family Assessment Response (FAR), all FAR staff from Phase 1 Offices (Aberdeen, Lynnwood, and Spokane zip codes 99201 and 99207) attended a week-long training conducted by the Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence at University of Washington-Tacoma campus. FAR Supervisors, Social Workers, Area Administrators, and Headquarters staff was trained on FAR policy and practice. Staff engaged in lengthy discussions about possible scenarios as they worked to build consensus around possible responses and had many opportunities to network and team-build.

FAR FAQ

How many intakes will be assigned to the FAR pathway?

ANSWER: Other states using programs similar to FAR found that 70 percent of their Child Protective Services cases received a differential response. In 2011, Children's Administration accepted 35,175 reports of child abuse and neglect. Of that number, 19,030 (almost 60 percent), alleged child neglect, compared to 34 percent that reported physical abuse and 6 percent that reported sexual abuse. We believe many neglect cases will screen in for a FAR response and many allegations of minor physical abuse could be assigned to FAR as well. An early review of cases since October 20, 2013, when we began using the new intake tool, shows that approximately 66 percent of screened-in CPS cases are appropriate for FAR.