

Washington State Children's Administration and Foster Parent
Region 1 North
Quarterly Regional Consultation Forum (HB 1624)
06/16/2015; 1:00 – 3 P.M.
Minutes

Welcome/Introductions: Barb Sheffler F2F; Dena Drury FT; Chris Rhodes F2F; Ruth Harris FT; David Needham F2F; Joey Charlton -- Homefinders Sup; Marie Scanlon F2F; Wendy White FT; Nora McGonagle SW; Nicole LaBelle DRA; Jeff Kincaid DLR AA; Robert Larson AA; Amber Sherman FT; Meaghan Flowers FT; Charina Carothers F2F; Dr. Don Ashley; Kris Randall AA; Shannon Boniface F2F Sup; Melissa Fielding DLR Sup; and 2 amazing foster parent.

Issues brought forth by representatives:

1. Several foster parents reporting that when they receive calls from social workers that they are feeling pressured into taking kids for which they are not licensed. If caregivers say "no" to placement then they feel manipulated into conceding. Caregivers have reported being belittled, antagonized, yelled at and made to feel guilty for not accepting placement.
 - People are saying that the placement coordinators have been wonderful to work with. The offices that don't have placement coordinators is where issues tend to arise.
 - Foster parent shared that there is a system that some teachers use called AESOP which is similar to a shared calendar. The shared calendar lists dates available and is connected to a phone service. This takes out the middle person. A need can be expressed and caregivers can except or not.
 - Recommended to start with IT and inquire about the AESOP program with Mark Hall or Sue Johnson – Joey to look into.
 - Issue brought up about social workers not giving full information on a child's issues or a false picture is painted and this leads to potential disruption.
 - Joey shared that the 15-300 is being sent out in Spokane. All of the information about the child should be shared on the 15-300.
 - In offices that don't have placement coordinators the 15-300s may not be given to caregivers as they should. A 15-300 should be given with each placement – respite is not considered a placement.
 - It is unsure if Caregiver Core Training covers refusal of placements when not a good fit. It is so important to make a good match. There needs to be recognition by the social worker that a child may not be the best fit even if they have an opening.
 - Foster parents are encouraged to call on their resources when a need arises.
 - Need identified for further training for outlying offices on how to use Famlink more efficiently.
 - It was mentioned that in Stevens County 24 kids came into care in 6 months and 17 of those children went into relative care.
2. Ongoing concern over lack of good quality communication and infrequent communication by social workers to caregivers.
 - There is ongoing concern over caregivers being blackballed if they speak up. The recommendation continues to be go up the chain of command if caregivers have issues that need to be addressed.
 - One of the CFWS Supervisors and unit went to a foster parent support group and it was a very positive experience. Supervisors and social workers are encouraged to attend foster parent support groups. It's about building relationships and should never be an us against them mentality.
 - Another idea is monthly potlucks to bring foster parents and social workers together.

- There is a get together at Thornton Murphy Park at 10 am on 6/25 and everyone is invited. It will be a fun opportunity for families to hang out.
 - In regard to volunteer vs. flex time for social workers it is a case by case basis. Staff are encouraged to talk with their supervisor and AA if an event can be approved.
3. Time set aside to give opportunity to share concerns not on the agenda.
- Chart in process of being updated as to when to call intake, social worker or both when an incident/injury occurs to a child. Original chart came from the First Placement Training.
 - Also requested is a list of medical providers who work well with foster families and the children they care for.

Statewide Consultation Meetings – R1N representatives – Melissa MacDougall

1. Any update from the April 20, 2015 statewide meeting?
2. What issue(s) are to be taken to the next statewide meeting on July 20, 2015?
 - Calls/e-mails not being returned in timely manner; lack of information being shared as to case plans for children; not being informed of when shared planning meetings, FTDMs and court hearings are taking place and are not feeling like they are a part of the team. Decisions being made about children and placement without their input. Court reports not being provided to caregivers.

Training Update

- Upcoming trainings for Region 1 North and any updates – no updates.

Recruitment Update – *Fostering Together*

- As of June 30th the contract with Fostering Together for recruitment and retention will be over. On July 1st there will be a new contract holder. Transition letter drafted. Fostering Together staff will no longer be available at the end of the month. There is concern over continuity of support for foster parents.

Retention / Support – *Fostering Together*

- Update on support groups – no updates
- FIRST – no updates
- Critical Support – no updates

Children's Administration Updates:

Region 1 North DCFS updates – Merilee Roberts or other designated representative

- Nicole shared there are no other updates as to the recruitment and retention contract as there is a review/appeal process – for this reason we cannot disclose who was awarded the contract.
- With regard to CA's budget there is a lot to reconcile. We have no money and the potential of a government shutdown on 7/1 is of concern. As of today there are 530 FTEs. Should the government shutdown occur there would only be 10% or 56 social workers on duty. AAGs can only respond to emergencies. No motions would be heard in court. Mid next week notices to social workers and supervisors would have to be sent out.

Region 1 North DLR updates – Jeff Kincaid or other designated representative

- Jeff shared DLR staff working hard to license families. Looking at increasing capacities. One third of licensed homes have zero placements and we are reaching out to them.

Regional HB 1624 Meeting – Tues., September 15, 2015; 1:00 – 3:00 PM; Spokane Children's Admin. Video Conferencing available.

Next Spokane FP Advisory Bd. Meeting – Tues., July 21, 2015; 1 – 2:30; Spokane Children's Admin. Video Conferencing available.

Statewide HB 1624 Meeting – Monday, April 20, 2015; 1 – 4 p.m.; video conference site in Spokane at the Spokane DCFS office