

Washington State Children's Administration and Foster Parent's Consultation Team

Minutes Region 2 HB-1624 Consultation Meeting

August 11 2008 in Walla Walla

Issues around meetings/staffings:

- CA's meeting (Permanency planning, FTDM's, staffings, etc.) need to take caregivers schedules into consideration. Caregivers presence at these meetings needs to be made a priority by staff. Having more consistent timelines/schedules for these meetings would be helpful.
- Caregivers need to be educated about the fact that they can request staffing/team meetings for issues they feel need to be addressed for their child ie: safety plans.
- Caregivers should be given equal consideration around scheduling meeting times so that they can be at them, and so they see that they are valued team members.
- There was a feeling that in the Walla Walla office these meetings need to be documented by an impartial person. That there should be sign off on action steps and sign off on the minutes as well.
- Meeting facilitators need to have the skills to keep the meetings under control, make sure all parties are acting in a respectful manner, and most importantly, keep the meetings child focused.

Need for more good news stories:

- Public opinion needs to be molded to see foster care in a more positive light. Need more regional "good news" stories going out to the press.

Adoption:

- Feeling that foster parents need to be more fully educated as they go through the adoption process, and be fully informed of all resources available to them.
- Foster parents experience a lot of pressure to adopt.

Communication Issues:

- Important to mold worker perception that when caregiver disagrees with workers recommendations, or when safety or well being of a child is a concern, that it is not

disrespectful to work up the chain of command until a resolution is found. There needs to be education on both sides that this is OK to do.

- Teach Caregivers and Workers to document more carefully, especially commitments made.
- According to the new region 2 RFTI trainer there are rumors going around that foster parents are “sabotaging reunification plans”. Foster parent’s response was that the foster parents share the reality of the situation which is in no way sabotage.
- Judges need better education on the new laws regarding caregiver’s right to share information with the court and why it’s important.
- All parties need to be educated on how to remain more objective, see the value of all input making its way to meetings and court hearings and how this better protects children.
- Social worker biases toward Caregivers has been being passed along to new staff.

Walla Walla office requesting an AAG:

- Walla Walla office has been requesting that they have an AAG rather than a prosecuting attorney for some time. They feel this affecting the outcome of children’s cases negatively. Can an AAG be assigned to that office?

Percentage goals don’t out way child’s best interest:

- Percentage goals for reunification and relative placement can stand in the way of just looking at what is in the best interest of each individual child. Best interest of the child needs to be the priority.

Request for more SPOKES programs region wide:

- Feeling that there should be a region wide mentorship program for Caregivers like the SPOKES program in Walla Walla.

Cultural shift needed:

- Need a cultural shift where workers don’t feel like they have to have all the answers; that it is OK to not know or even to be wrong. That it is OK to team play with caregivers and problem solve together.

It was brought up that over 30 beds in Walla Walla are not taking placements from the local office anymore. A discussion ensued around why foster parents are quitting:

- Foster parents continue to feel that they are not respected by staff.
- Foster parents reported that they are not getting reimbursements in a timely manner.
- Foster parents felt that they are not allowed to be engaged in the permanency planning process.
- Feeling that foster parent trainings are not adequate for the long term.
- Fear of the CPS/DLR investigative process. Fear of founded allegations also scares off prospective foster parents.
- Pertinent information needed to properly care for the foster child is not always shared.
- Need a consistent policy from CA about what can and cannot be shared and how to communicate that information.
- Difficult to get proper support needed in knowing how to deal with challenging behaviors and issues that children have.
- Difficult to get proper, and quality, mental health referrals and services for foster children.
- Inconsistency in how foster parents are treated, looks like favoritism.
- When complaints are made about issues or treatment there is often no follow-up and things don't seem to change. Would like input to know that things have actually been followed through on.
- Mentioned that maybe Ernie? Could do a training for staff on customer service, explaining what respect looks like to a foster parent.
- Notification of regional meetings needs to get out in a timely manner.
- Would like to see a follow-up training to PRIDE for caregivers as there is so much thrown at them all at once.
- Foster Parents and Workers are both fearing retaliation when they speak out.

- Teaming is taught but not always practiced.
- Need expectations and roles to be clearer.
- Information sharing rules need to be clarified.

Two issues brought to October's statewide meeting from Region 2:

1. Need for consistent statewide Foster Parent adoption training and mentoring. (Suggestion to have the training co-facilitated by an adoptive parent and a state worker, have the training recorded and make it mandatory for FP's to view it before they consider adoption.)
2. Continued need for foster parents to be treated with respect and seen as team members.