

**ESHB 1624 Regional Quarterly
Consultation Sessions
2008 Meeting Minutes**

Region 1

January 15, 2008

1 PM – 3 PM

MOSES LAKE DCFS

ATEC BUILDING 1800, CONFERENCE ROOM A&B

Present:

Marty Butkovich, DCFS Regional Administrator

Jeff Kincaid, DLR Sup – Regional

Laurie Palmquist, DLR – Regional

Dru Powers, FFK & Foster Parent

Portia Hebdon, Foster Parent – Moses Lake

Michael Olson, Placement Staff – Moses Lake

Connie Morlin, DLR – Area Administrator

Lisa Johnson, DCFS Homefinders – Spokane

Tim Abbey, DCFS Area Administrator (AA)

Debbie Fenske, DCFS Area Administrator

David Needham, DCFS staff

Chris Rhodes, DCFS staff

Nancy Leigh, RIFTI trainer

Connie Lambert-Eckel, CA Deputy Admin.

Paul Bjur, DCFS supervisor

Kris Randall, DCFS Area Administrator

Melissa Clifner, DCFS staff

Teresa Contreras, DCFS staff

Deanna Reed, foster parent

Kerry & Nancy Bryant, foster parents

Aimee Moses, foster parent

Susan Stolsig, foster parent

Nanette Kagele, foster parent

Kate DuVall, DCFS CWS Sup

Christine Garcia, DCFS CWS Sup

Juanita Jachetta, DCFS CPS Sup

Manuel Castillo, DCFS SW

Cale Merkley, DCFS SW

Buffy Nicholson, DCFS SW

Luis Ochoa, DCFS SW

Brent Borg, DCFS AA

Don Ashley, MD; physician

Charlene Fuchs, DCFS staff

Margie Parrilla, DCFS staff

Michelle Cutlip, RIFTI trainer

Sandy Turner, DCFS AA

Russ Haugen, DCFS AA

Launi Burdge, DCFS AA

Teresa Eatherton, DCFS staff

Joy McClendon, DLR

Elisa Adolphsen, foster parent

Carla Grytdal, foster parent

Cindy Gardner, foster parent

Judi Gruver, foster parent

Caren Courtright, foster parent

ISSUES:

Jeff Kincaid explained that we would be discussing issues that foster parents are having with Children's Administration. Some of these issues were; foster parent respect, having an individual child plan, retaliation from the Department, training, foster parent and child visits, a family AG, termination of parental rights or best interest of the child.

Jeff stated that we should have two top priorities that we take to state. He suggested; Respect and being part of the team. If we address these two areas, we are actually addressing the rest. One of the foster parents stated to add best interest of children. Jeff

stated being part of the team includes best interests of child. Foster parent stated without mentioning children you're not including the child. Two action steps for those problems. Jeff suggested one easy fix, and one longer term. Examples; when you call the Social Worker, you get a call back. Group addresses teaming between foster parents and Department, some of the issues can be discussed locally.

Tim Abbey:

Tim discussed communication with Social Worker concerns; Full voice mail box, go up chain of command, AA gives ideas that to push 0 to get a receptionist to get more immediate help. Tim asked how big is this problem on a scale of 1 – 5, 1 is low, 5 is high, they feel it is a level 4. One of the foster parents stated that it depends on the Social Worker, he has had no trouble but other foster parents have problem. One problem is when a Social Worker has left the job, the mailbox is full and no one tells the foster parent, or when the foster parent is at the Dr. office and they need a signature, and no social worker is around. Another foster parent stated that with guardianship, the social worker needs to know the child. Tim stated that unless you need a payment that they are out, and they aren't in contact because we trust you.

Communication when a child is to be moved.

There is a five day notice to foster parent, with some exceptions. Usually an Area Administrator has approved the move. An example is when a child has been moved without notice. When the law originally came out they were doing a 30 day notice and they are no longer doing that. Tim states that disruption is usually the least of their worries, and that the Area Administrator is trying to make a decision with what information the social worker has.

Communication between SW staff and Foster Parents

In regard to communication, Tim recommended a letter being sent to notify foster families of the change in SW for children in their care.

Clothing Vouchers – SSPS:

Clothing vouchers are \$100 per placement episode and may not occur at every placement. When clothing is purchased with a clothing voucher, a receipt is given to the social worker to file and this could be looked at if there are questions as to clothing purchases and the child's belongings. Exceptions – teens, graduation, team sports. Jeff Kincaid gave an example of when a child is moved from foster parent to foster parent, ask the social worker for a voucher and the social worker cannot give them one. Kate DuVall suggests that the social worker go back to the previous foster parent and ask for child's items. One foster parent suggests that maybe an itemized form can be filled out with what the child comes into placement with and make sure they leave with those same items. A good idea is to have an inventory form that is filled out with the child's belongings. It was also suggested that clothing voucher purchases are documented with the receipts to include with the inventory.

Child Care:

Foster parent training, will Children's Administration cover daycare costs? Yes.
Does Children's administration support sibling visitation, yes.

Over Payment Letters:

Connie Morlin explained that an audit was done in 2006, and that is where most of the letters are coming from. Foster parents aren't getting good instructions when they first get placement. Recommend SSPS come to trainings and train on how to fill out paperwork correctly. They recommend to appeal the over payment letter by following the directions on the form. It was recommended that foster parents also document the day a child comes into their home and leaves their home.

Respite Care:

There are two types of respite; retention and child specific.

Retention Respite – two days a month, 24 days a year. Can be banked, used however you want. Foster parent to call respite coordinator. Emergency placement, vacation set before child placed. Usually need two weeks notice, pool of resources is other foster parents. Foster parents are encouraged to find relatives or friends who can be cleared and can come into their home to do respite besides just relying on other foster parents.

Child Specific is regular planned respite and is part of the child's case plan.

Dr. Ashley – Dr. Ashley discussed ABC Dental and that children can be seen at their first tooth. This also has to be mentioned in the well-child check.

DVD Training – Nancy Leigh and Michelle Cutlip are looking at DVD training in local offices to provide training hours for foster parents. They continue to look at offering PRIDE Training in Spanish. Nancy is going over SSPS in PRIDE. Michelle is beginning to do training on SSPS.

Dru Powers facilitated a discussion with the foster parents regarding who would be the representative from Region 1 for the statewide regional meetings. It was decided by the foster parents in attendance that the following would rotate in attending the statewide meetings and that Dru Powers will coordinate arrangements with CA. They are: Kerry Bryant, Portia Hebdon, Ginger Schutt and Meegan Ware. They will represent Region 1 for this year, after which another vote will be taken to choose our representatives.

Upcoming Meetings:

Regional Consultation Forums;

Tuesday, April 15, 2008; 1 PM – 3 PM; Pullman

Tuesday, July 15, 2008; 10:00 to 12:00; Spokane DCFS Office; SW Conference Rm.

Tuesday, October 21, 2008; 1:00 – 3:00; Colville (place to be determined.)

Statewide Consultation Forums:

April 23, 2008; 1:30 – 3:30; hosted by Region 4 in Seattle

July 15, 2008; 1:30 – 3:30; Spokane DCFS; SW Conference Room

October, 2008; hosted by Region 3; place to be determined

**Region 4 Consultation Session
Foster Parents, Relative Caregivers, Children's Administration
February 21, 2008
Kent DCFS Office**

Introductions were made around the room, including foster parents, relative caregivers and Children's Administration (CA) staff. The following documents were distributed: an agenda, SSB 5321; ESHB 1624 Region, and Statewide meeting minutes.

Onsite childcare was provided by the Girl Scouts

Adell Richardson (CA), Stephanie Allison-Noone (CA), Tess Thomas, and Joel Odimba (CA) gave opening remarks revisiting purpose of these meetings. Adell distributed telephone contact lists for Region 4.

Gia Wesley, CA Area Administrator for the King South Office, stated she has been in her position since 11/07. She discussed the Family Team Decision Making model being used in her office, and that CA staff were big believers in working with families and talking with foster parents to preserve placements. She stated their goals were to keep children stabilized in foster homes. She also stated that she was committed to social workers returning telephone calls, submitting payments in a timely manner, and wanted positive communication with foster parents, and for foster parents to feel satisfied with responses.

Yolonda Marzest, CA foster parent trainer, stated that in the last meeting foster parents had asked for more weekend and evening topic classes. She stated there will be 1 night or weekend class available every month. Flyers for Spring training will be out soon.

Ruth Graham, Fostering Together, introduced her staff that were present at the meeting.

Marie, Mockingbird Society, stated that their website is mockingbirdsociety.org and their telephone number is 206-323-5437 for those looking for more information about their program.

3 small groups were formed. The following are ideas/issues brought up in the groups:

Group #1

- Retention of social worker staff with standards of practice across the region and statewide; social worker training regarding payments for respite to foster parents and caregivers; cross regional training regarding visitation and respite
- Lower caseloads for social workers
- Social workers and visitation staff to have training on proper child carseat usage
- Cleaner visitation facilities with age appropriate space and activities
- Uniformity on court processes statewide; better training for foster parents in preparing reports to courts, and regarding their role in court and case plans; timely notification of court dates and would like an opportunity to address the courts; would like to be able to give input regarding case plans
- Increased notice of family group conferences (not the day before); facilitator to remain neutral and unbiased, rather than moving forward DSHS agenda
- More information about child prior to adoption

- Training for emotional and legal issues surrounding foster adopt cases; and support for emotional impact on foster families with child in placement
- Training for foster parents regarding Indian Child Welfare and Adoptions
- Need resource list / placement book for foster parents, to include an emergency telephone number that is readable and accessible
- Photo of child for caseworker file
- Allow release of complete medical information on child and parent (as much as possible)
- Would like WACs sent out to foster parents, and website of WACs identified
- Special time set aside for first time placements with child, to help child and foster parent settle in – possible special worker to help facilitate initial placement
- State to have a better financial stipend
- Support group needed in Vashon Island area

Group #2

- School issues – need counselors working with children in classrooms, for those falling behind, Treehouse does have some support services but more is needed. Solutions: Stephanie Allison-Noone will send out Treehouse education services information by 3/15/08, and Celeste Carey will send out relative caregiver information.
- Daycare issues- in need of daycare afterhours for foster parents that need to comply with work obligations. Solutions: foster parents will contact social workers to brainstorm; foster parents can also call Hopelink to get information regarding transportation requirements.
- Response from social workers is not timely. Foster parents in need of referrals to Sylvan Reading, ICW case.
- Concerns about CASA not being assigned for 2 years on an ICW case. Solution: follow-up on getting specific case information. CASA waiting to visit child, showing up late at night, making inappropriate comments to foster parents. Solution: Joel Odimba will follow up with Linda Katz on CASA issues.
- Foster parents up for license renewal receiving a letter from licensing that states foster parent must turn in required paperwork in 30 days or lose their license. Letter is abrasive. Copy of a letter will be set to an Area Administrator. Concern that licensor told foster parent they could only visit home during daytime hour. Solution: Joel Odimba will contact Pleas Green 2/28/08 regarding letter
- Foster parent/Caregiver expressed issue with lack of response from a worker in the OAACS office. Wanted better communication. This information was relayed to OAACS office.
- Pierce County works as a team, communicates with foster parent to provide information. Issues around communicating notice of removal/change of placement

Group #3

- Need support for Native American children and foster parents, to include social worker visits, protecting children, memo of understanding with tribes, and guidelines, and more structure and accountability
- Inter-Regional services when a child lives in one region and another child lives in a different region, cross county line services needed including mental health services
- Increased foster parent activities around adoption and transition, give foster parents more voice and active participation

- Foster children have rights, including the medically fragile, developmentally disabled, Medicaid rights, AAG rights – the feeling is that special needs children do not have rights across systems
- DSHS workers need to be held accountable, given lower caseloads and make more visits
- Resources are needed for special education as Treehouse is not enough; resources for transition through adoptions
- More active voice for birth parents in cases
- Increased teaming, respect and professional with foster parent and other team members, help to get standards, be proactive
- Training for caregivers that is convenient for caregivers (ie. after 5pm) with available childcare
- Training/classes outside of RIFT, better infrastructure and guidelines, and what is needed for credit
- Placement support to address challenges with school attendance, youth kicked out of school, behaviors that require increased supervision, and structure/resources to support
- Transportation to visits and case related activities – pay for time spent transporting
- Immediate appeal process for when children are pulled from a foster home – 991 to review decision, make social worker decisions accountable
- Native America LICWAC (Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee) classes and training for foster parents
- Maintain sibling connections, including placement, adoptions and transitions
- Prioritize hearings/court, AAG of the day does not know the case, social worker not available, better prepared to hear and represent case
- CASA/GAL visits to child in the home, more contact with child and caregiver. CASA should share information with foster parents
- Respite issues around specialized respite, adequate reimbursement, need more homes for respite as resources are not there, placements in respite homes
- Identified children in home – tracking where children go/are
- Referrals – foster parent wasn't told they were being investigated – need better communication, better training and timely results
- Follow-up information on this meeting and decisions

Caregiver comment cards:

“Facilitated sessions were best part. We need microphones to hear people, and break out sessions should be move to smaller rooms to discuss. Get started on time. Have kids a little farther from session. Hard to hear.”

“Would be nice if everyone on the agenda was actually present. It seems like you try to accomplish too much at these meetings-can you prioritize so we can get things done? Sharing by each group is not necessary.”

“Please start on time on a school night. We leave by 7pm to get home by bedtime. If Possible have a room with better acoustics-hard to hear. Thank you for the childcare! I am interested in proactive support for foster parents who need to go to LICWAC. I have had to navigate this on my own and it has not been a good experience. There is a need for support for parents of Native children.”

“Foster parents that don't have an outside job, so foster is a job for us. We should have a check each month with tax out then we could file each year.”

The next Region 4 Consultation Session will be Wednesday April 23, 2008 from 9:00am-12:00pm. It will be held at Casey Family Services, 1123 23rd Ave. Seattle, WA 98122.

The Statewide Consultation Session will occur the same date and location, April 23, 2008 from 1:00pm-4:00pm, with the DSHS Secretary Robin Arnold-Williams in attendance. During this meeting, Region 4's top issues, solutions and Region 4's responses will be presented.

**Region VI
Foster/Relative Caregiver and Children's Administration Consultation Work Group
ESHB 1624 Meeting Minutes
Tumwater-Nisqually Room
January 9, 2008**

Conference phones were made available in all 12 offices for foster parents to join the meeting. Foster parents and Children's Administration staff joined the meeting via phone from the following sites: Vancouver, South Bend, Aberdeen and Port Angeles.

Foster/Relative Caregivers were also present for the meeting from Centralia, Tumwater and Kelso.

Issue: Review the Purpose of the Meeting:

- Some foster parents have stated that they do not understand the purpose of the meeting and how this meeting is intended to be different from ongoing recruitment and retention meetings

Plan:

- The group reviewed the purpose of the meeting
- Danielle Baxter, FPAWS provided the foster parents with history on how the legislation was developed
- Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1624 was passed on April 20, 2007. This bill requires regional and statewide quarterly meetings between Children's Administration (CA), foster parents, and the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPAWS)

Issue: Increasing Communication and Future Meeting Planning:

- Foster parents have not been receiving adequate notice of the meetings, and attendance has been low.

Plan:

- Need to provide childcare for the meetings. Offices should work with foster parents to provide outside childcare, or offer a room where foster parents or office staff can watch the foster children during the meeting to promote more attendance.
- FPAWS will develop a letter to send to foster parents to explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Office coordinators need to reach out to foster parents, making more personal phone calls to increase attendance
- Confirm future meeting dates in advance, including the dates of the statewide meeting so that foster parents can plan

Issue: Representation at Quarterly Statewide Meetings:

- Marci Meiss and Amy Gardner represented Region VI foster parents at the last statewide ESHB 1624 meeting and provided an update of the statewide meeting.
- Foster parents from Vancouver were concerned that most of the foster parents from Region VI were in the Vancouver area and the statewide meetings needed additional representation.
- Some foster parents were concerned that they searched for the minutes to the statewide foster parent meeting, and they were not accessible on the website.
- Foster parents need to utilize the time from when they receive the minutes to the next regional meeting to work on and discuss issues at that local level
- At the statewide meeting there were 8 issues identified which will be further discussed and worked on. Those issues are:
 1. Retaliation from the department about speaking out and/or sharing their ideas and “being blackballed” (children removed or not getting placements in their homes)
 2. Recruitment and retention of foster parents
 3. DLR and CA social workers being respectful and treating the foster parents with respect and as a team member
 4. Foster parents should have more input into when the child (and foster parent) is available to get the child to a visit
 5. Rate assessment inconsistency across the state
 6. Assistant Attorney General’s (AAG) representation across the state vs. Prosecuting Attorney’s
 7. Family Courts across the state
 8. Reunification of parental rights and what is in the child’s best interest?

Plan:

- All that were present were reminded that any foster parent can attend the statewide quarterly meeting. The region will only reimburse the two representatives identified by the group for the \$25 stipend.
- The group decided that local office meetings would need to be scheduled to start at least 30 minutes prior to the regional meeting beginning. This will allow for the group to facilitate more discussion at the local level and identify those issues that can be addressed at the local level and which ones need to be moved forward to the regional meeting
- Bob Partlow will work with Michael Luque at Headquarters to ensure that the statewide meeting minutes are placed on the foster parent website in a way that is more easily accessible.
- The idea was mentioned to have one representative from each office attend the regional quarterly meetings in person to represent the issues from their area.
- The region office will forward all minutes received to the local office coordinators to be sent out in foster parent mailings.
- Foster parents will be provided with the contact information for Marci and Amy to be added to local newsletters so they can contact them with issues that need to be addressed at the statewide level
 - Marci Meiss ---
 - Phone: (360) 880-5330
 - Email: marcimiess@hotmail.com
 - Amy Gardner---

- Phone: 360-578-9668
- Email: michaelamy52@msn.com

Issue: Process for filing a complaint against a social worker:

- Foster parents voiced the concern that they want to see concrete results and answers. The example was raised that if the foster parents receive a complaint against them, it is investigated, and remains in their file. Foster parents want to be able to have something in the file of the worker if they have a complaint against them as well.
- Region 2 has a process for complaints, “Common Ground”. There is no process in Region VI.
- Foster parents in Region VI want to have a concrete way of making a complaint and knowing that it is being taken seriously and improvements will be made as a result of the complaint.

Plan:

- Danielle Baxter will send an email to the affiliates across the nation to find out about other options similar to the “Common Ground” approach and bring the information to the next meeting to further discuss this approach.

Issue: Access to social worker support and response after hours:

- Foster parents have not been able to reach social workers on the weekend to help them. They contact Central Intake and have been told to wait until Monday. One example was when a foster parent had a death in her family and needed the children moved. She was not able to reach anyone at the local level and was left in a difficult situation.
- The only way foster parents can reach social workers in the local office is if they know their home contact information.
- There needs to be more of a response to support foster parents after normal business hours.
- The foster parent crisis line is available, but the number has not been publicized widely enough to foster parents
- Need to establish a time limit on how long social workers have to call a foster parent back.
- Foster parents stated they need a respectful and effective after-hours response that starts with the first phone call

Plan:

- Send out the foster parent crisis line phone number to foster parents
- Amy and Marci will raise this issue at the statewide meeting, given the concern is with Central Intake not contacting the local worker

Issue: Nurse Consultation Line:

- The department is being required to develop a process for children entering care to have a health examination within 72 hours of entering care. As a part of this, one idea has been to develop a nurse consultation line that foster parents can utilize after a child enters care. The nurse line will be available to review any issues that the child is having, and will refer the caregiver to take the child to see a physician immediately if there are any major problems. The group working on development of this line would like input from foster parents on the nurse consultation line.

Feedback:

- Most families have medical providers, and already have medical on-call lines after school.
- Most children already have a physician when they enter care so they have access after hours.
- This might be duplication
- More rural areas do not have 24 hour response available and this line would be beneficial
- Many teens move around and don't have regular medical providers
- Foster parents would want a paper form for them to complete to show the paper trail from the consultation line
- As long as the line responds to the needs of foster parents, then this would be helpful, especially given kids who have been the victim of medical neglect
- This shouldn't be required if foster parents want to use their own providers
- Some offices have a public health nurse doing Passport, and it would be good to utilize a local resource for foster parents
- Not everything can be diagnosed over the phone, due to the age of young kids, being non-verbal, and issues that they may not be able to tell you about, or that are obvious (i.e. ear infections)
- Suggest that the department do a risk based tiered approach, focusing on those children with medical needs and children under 3 needing to see a physician in person within 72 hours; others can use the phone line.
- If this policy came out there would be a need for more clarification for foster parents: when does the 72 hours start counting? What happens when a child moves from one home to another on day 2? Who is responsible for the medical?
- If a child is seen at the 72 hour mark, and then again at 30 days for the EPSDT the medical card won't cover it
- Would it be possible to make the appointment within 72 hours? Since some doctors can't get you in, at least you would have the appointment

Items that were brought up that we did not have time to address were listed on the "Parking Lot" for future agenda building:

- Foster care assessments do not address the level of need for children with developmental disabilities. Need to review and utilize the assessment form from DDD to use in lieu of the foster care rate assessment for medically fragile children.
- Need additional training opportunities on caring for the hair and skin for African American children
- Counseling for biological children of foster parents
- More information is needed about the foster children prior to their placement
- Damage reimbursement for damages to the foster parent's homes

Next Meeting:

The next meeting for Region VI is on April 9, 2008 in the Vancouver DCFS office in the Lewis Room. The regional meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m., allowing for local offices to have their pre-meet, and will conclude at 12:00. A conference phone number will be sent to the local offices prior to the meeting.

Future Meetings:

Future meeting dates for the remainder of the year are as follows:

(Remember that local meetings will begin at 9:30, and the region meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m.)

Region VI: April 9, 2008 (10am-12pm)
Vancouver DCFS Lewis Room

Statewide: April 23, 2008
Casey Field Office 1123 23rd Ave
Seattle, WA 98122
(206) 322-6711 1:00 to 4:00

Region VI: July 9, 2008 (10am-12pm).
Tumwater DCFS Nisqually Room

Statewide: To be determined

Region VI: October 8, 2008 (10am-12pm)
Vancouver DCFS Lewis Room

Statewide: To be determined