

Statewide  
Children's' Administration/Foster Parent Representatives  
Consultation Team  
Meeting  
July 15, 2008

**Introductions:** Micharel Luque Foster Care Kinship Care manager-

- Handouts for the following: Agenda and regional statewide issues, 1624 Regional issues handout and consultation worksheets.
- Ground rules. Start and end on time, stay solution focused, listen-one speaker at a time, no side conversations, remain open to other opinions.
- What is workable? Listen to what the issues are and how to work through them.
- Look at what the concern is and how to make it workable and better.
- Refer to 1624 Regional handout on the issues. The top two are items the group has struggled with are DLR CPS investigations and Foster Care rate assessment.
- Prioritize the next issues.
- This is a work group, not just talking and not moving forward

**What is working well in the regions-** Lin Payton and Foster Parent Representatives & CA Staff

- Region 4. Work on the issues instead of gathering more issues. Developed groups consisting of teamwork( making sure moving forward with accessibility with SW), training and resources, placement, respite and resource guide. Buy in accomplished by which group they wanted to work on. Took issues and found they fit into three categories. Got beyond the problems and focused with folks that had passion on the issue.
- Region 5- Honing in on communication from CA on issues. Responding quickly via phone and solving issues. Good representation. A lot of collaboration between CA, Foster parents, etc.
- Region 1- Getting a lot of feedback from administration and getting problems resolved quickly. Hurt to Hold (?) conference was incredible. Being aware of issues that come. Respite will always be a problem.
- Region 2- Really good relations with RA and assistant. Open and recognize the issues and how to filter down to fix. Common Ground facilitation has been helpful.
- Region 6 – Good communication is happening along with FPAWS.
- Region 3- Kim Elke has been out of the loop but brought along a new foster parent Shala Crow.

**Action Steps Taken-Feedback** – Lin Payton and 1624 Participants

**Update from Aprils' Agenda Items-** Cheryl Stephani & Pleas Green

- Cheryl would like to hear next steps and feedbacks from the regions.
- Returning phone calls, emails, voicemails, SW in the office, acknowledgement that message has been received.

- Connie Lambert-Eckel called everyone's voicemail in her chain to see how they reflected or if the mailbox was full. 90% of staff was doing well with a 10% of staff that needs some work.
- Marci Mess stated she received no feedback from the letter sent.
- Question was brought up about how do you get that 10% of staff to care and respond? How do you hold the staff accountable? These things are a safety issue as in the letter regarding the breast milk.
- Was pleased to see that a lot of SW came to the Foster Parent event to assist. Showed that SW respected the foster parents.
- How would it be best handled and put a plan in place to address the 10% of SW not responding?
- Also problems with change in workers and when the foster parent is notified of this.
- Foster parents could also leave a message that the SW message is not up to date.
- Communication might be better via email rather than phone call.
- Cheryl said there are two issues: Phones need to be updated along with email. If you don't get the response how do you create that feeling of safety? Also updating phone lists as a resource.
- Not sure that a letter will solve the problem of ineffective SW's.
- We need a culture that staff doesn't feel threatened and foster parents don't feel threatened when they take it up the chain of command for the safety of the children. Negative culture currently and look at ways to solve this. Awareness of what we have to do for each other.
- Suggestion was brought up that possibly have a directive come down from Headquarters that filters down to RA or supervisors as there are still gaps and have them come up with their regional strategies to work with their teams to ensure that SW knows about timely responses to Foster parents.
- Would like a centralized place regarding data to determine improvement.
- What is the follow up to keep this level of communication going? And long term goals?
- There are also issues with Supervisors not allowing overtime for the SW's.
- The foster parent is the most informed about the child. They are the ones trying to keep these kids safe. Foster parents feel that SW are not listening to the foster parent.
- Cheryl feels that people need a place to call and develop a subgroup to address this issue.
- Want feedback and follow up from low on the chain that folks are being heard.
- When things don't work where do the foster parents go, Cheryl said to contact Constituents relations or Ombudsman's office.
- Failsafe is Constituent Relations, Ombudsman or Cheryl's office.
- Foster parents don't feel backed by the Department.
- Issue is beyond updating voicemails, developing culture of partnership with foster parents and Department. Foster parents need to keep calling to resolve issues.
- Two issues: How you work through difficult issues and how to build culture and partnership and sustain it. How to improve the partnership.

- Wants a central location for all complaints to come into so they can be resolved.
- Question was asked if the Family Team Decision Making meetings are resolving the teaming aspect. Not sure if that is working.
- What would happen if information in a report form began to come into one of those two offices? Ombudsman and Constituent relations? Cheryl states that as we do talk more about alternate places to go and bring the threads together. She would like to take this issue back to our technology people and DLR.
- We are all working to create a system that works.
- No more firewalls we are working together as a team.

**Foster Parent liaisons need training in liaison work.**

- Asking for FPAWS attendance to assist the foster parents.

**Foster Care Rate Assessment:**

- There is acknowledgment that this is currently not working
- What we have and how we make this work right now.
- How to make the current rate assessment work.
- Cheryl states that discussion it did occur. Move to a Foster Care rate assessment and working through the tool and the rate. All regions are doing something in this area.
- Region 1 –already doing
- Region 2 - centralized and by Dec. 08 will have the rest of the regions except for Ellensburg and Sunny side
- Region 3- All centralized and in place
- Region 4- starting pilot with Martin Luther King – plans to move to this model by Dec. 08-Centralized Rate model.
- Region 5- moving to the model. PDF approved by DSHS. One in Bremerton, and Tacoma. Non perm appointments. Hopefully up well before December.
- Region 6- Have moved to centralized in Tumwater, rest of the region is not centralized due to 12 offices and the wide geography of these. Each office cluster under AA's are doing it.
- Also looking at medically fragile infants with Nancy in Region 4.
- Myra thinks this should be a standing Field Ops agenda item.
- Cheryl took the issue back and wants to deal with strengths instead of the deficiencies on rate assessment. Is there a way to structure the rate, building strength and skills of the child.
- Cheryl doesn't feel this issue will be on the A list when in front of the Legislature.
- Two issues: Sometimes people exaggerate the conditions of the child, those foster parents are highly capable and be able to handle the issues, doesn't mean the child is any less difficult. Its not just a matter of throwing more money at the foster parents.
- 10 years ago there was an assignment that was looking at the model in place that did not fit the criteria of medically fragile children for the rate assessment. And there are still some pockets of kids that don't fit into the model of where the rate assessment says they should be.

- Nancy feels this might be a good assignment to look at. We are funded for the model to look at this. There are two pilot sites.
- Inconsistency from worker to worker on how they rate the youth.
- Belief that we should look at other systems on how to support the youth.
- Push from mental health community for more wrap around for those kids that have significant mental health issues.
- Two issues, payment too low and foster parents are not getting the support and services.
- Where services are available are the foster parents not getting the services they need. The rural areas are difficult to service.

**DLR:** Follow up. Small workgroup to include frequently asked questions. Regions providing training. No problem with training with foster parent groups. DLR/CPS investigations. If you have questions call Pleas Green. Hope to have final draft of brochure at the October meeting. On line orientation is being updated. Each region is doing some training but not consistent along with Pre Service. Question was brought up about unfounded findings. Region 1 will go out and speak to any group. Connie Morlin is available to address concerns about her workers.

**Foster Parent Representatives Input-** All the regions are working on plans to have regular monthly visits. Cheryl wanted this on the agenda and wanted feedback. What do we need to be thinking about?

- One foster parent say it might work well with the SW rotate their visits when coming in the home. Discussion around many kids in foster home along with the same amount of SW and having to schedule times for all.
- Per Braam we must have 30 days face to face contact in the home.
- SW is asking that the foster parent be available during the day. Off hours and weekends would work better.
- How do you find out which private agencies are certified as that would qualify for a 30 day face to face.
- The group would like Cheryl to email everyone on this. How would we do this respectfully with everyone's time involved? This falls into a conversation around teaming.
- Respects works on both side for time issues.
- Possibly have a sheet for teens that could answer questions rather than doing the home visits.

#### **Foster Parent Newsletter**

- Came together a couple of months ago. Asked for input. Include chain of command and is available on line and put on foster parent website and keep updated.

**Foster Parent Conference:** Group already has the date.

**Statewide Agenda Items: Lin Payton- Acknowledge the issues (didn't talk about medical/dental). Possibly invite someone next time such as medical assistants, etc.**

**Region 1- Meegan Ware & Kerry Bryant**

**Region 2- Mary Jeanne-Smith**

**Region 3- Kim Elke & Shala Crow**

**Region 4 – Tess Thomas & Ruth Graham**

**Region 5- Debra converse & Debra Vancleaves**

**Region 6 – Amy Gardner & Marci Miess**

**Updates**

**Future Travel to Statewide Meetings-** Talk about for one meeting we can get together. Go to each of the regions and costing out and making decisions based on cost. What is the most cost effective?

**Next Meeting**

**Region 3 October 13, 2008 1:30-4:30 SPO community Room**

**Braam update next meeting.**

Meetings need to be run by foster parents and not staff. Only in the audience.

Invite some folks to join the meeting. Getting information out to foster parents.

Could some of these items be addressed at the conference in Yakima?