

Missouri State Foster Care & Adoption Board
Minutes
March 11, 2014
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Dean Aye, Eric Pilson, Janet Richardson, Nickie Steinhoff, Kelly Schultz, Suzie Forbis, Linda Hosman, Karen Anderson, Michelle Martin and Derek Williams

Children’s Division Support Staff: Tim Decker, Julie Lester, Amy Martin, and Sarah Bashore

Absent: Elizabeth Tattershall, Kelly Floyd, Lori Ross and Melinda Nicholson

Visitors: Chrissy Mayberry, Dawn Caruso, Joe Beck

Presenters: Donna Cash from DESE, Dale Wimer from DESE, and Beth Dessem from CASA.

Introductions/Roll Call:

At 10:00 a.m. the meeting began with introductions. There were three new members at the meeting, Linda Hosman, Karen Anderson and Michelle Martin.

Oath of Office:

Tim Decker, Children’s Division Director, swore in the three new members.

The Five Year Plan:

Tim Decker explained the process and how the Division would like to see the system in five years. He wanted feedback from the Board on what they felt could or should be changed. Tim gave the Board time to reflect first. Below are thoughts the Board expressed:

- The need for more technology both for workers in the field and via online training options, especially in rural areas, was addressed.
- Flip the Division-let staff work their way up to becoming an investigator, instead of having staff start in the position, allowing for more experienced workers to obtain an investigator position.
- More technology for staff and resource parents.
- Develop Entrance Homes instead of Emergency Homes for children entering care. Create a different way of training resource parents. Entrance Homes would transition the child to a permanent foster home. This would help reduce the moves of children. This type of home would “front load” services to children and families, completing all initial screenings and stabilizing the child.
- There is a need for consistent removals of children. Effective diversions are needed as well. The length in stay is too long. Better job of placing children. Thirty Days to Family should be the norm, not the exception.

- Foster/Adopt inquiry call backs are not occurring timely. Improve the response time.
- There are many issues with the judicial system. CD should take a firm stance with the courts and legal system.
- There seems to be a lack of checks and balances in the court system when children are removed or placed back into the home.
- Improve on the professionalism of all staff involved in the system. The judicial system has a lack of respect for resource providers.
- For CD to help advocate for resource parents when their rights have been violated. Also, if there is an issue with a licensed home, CD needs to address the issue with professionalism.
- Rewards for licensed foster parents who do well with the children placed in their home.
- More qualified, licensed homes are needed.
- Consistency across the system, including the court system.
- Diversity and cultural awareness that is inclusive of resource families, and staff at the highest decision making levels in Children's division statewide (regionally and locally)
- Training for resource providers is needed. Using Adobe Connect or streaming videos if providers cannot attend in person may be an option.
- Need for campaign change. Focus on foster homes more than adoptive homes.
- Mediation training for CD staff, specific to Family Support Team Meetings.
- Have more treatment options for children. Neurofeedback is an example of alternative treatment.
- Specific changes with regard to the judicial system:
 - Education for judges, juvenile officers, attorneys and guardian ad litem.
 - Respect from Judges given to resource parents, as they know the child best.
 - What is the judges' definition or view of success for families?

McKinney – Vento:

Donna Cash from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education presented on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 is a United States federal law that provides federal money for homeless shelter programs. This program is a part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Donna provided a handout to the Board which may be found at: <http://dese.mo.gov/qs/gr/homeless/documents/11-homeless-brochure.pdf>.

Donna discussed with the Board how to identify homeless children, the child's educational rights, homeless coordinators, enrollment, and transportation.

For regional training, contact Donna, she will be able to help find training or the National Center for McKinney-Vento has training as well. The trend for the last year has been older youth unable to go to school because they are told by parents to work and earn money for the family. Also, older youth are questioning their sexual identity, the parents then kick them out for doing so.

Missouri Option Program:

Dale Wimer from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education presented the [Missouri Option Program](#). The Missouri Option Program permits full-time, public school enrolled students who are at least 17 years of age and who are at risk of dropping out or not graduating with their cohort group the opportunity to earn a standard high school diploma. Graduation through the Missouri Option Program is not dependent on Carnegie credit attainment. It is a *competency-based* program approved by the State School Board that utilizes a high school equivalency exam as an end-of-course event testing content mastery for graduation purposes. The exam, sanctioned by the state for the Missouri Option program, is the HiSET test, developed and distributed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Additional information regarding the new Missouri High School Equivalency Test may be found at [www.http://hiset.ets.org/](http://hiset.ets.org/). Missouri Option students successfully passing the exam and completing all other program requirements are eligible to receive a high school diploma.

Dale explained the following:

- Program eligibility standards
- Program instructor standards
- Program counseling standards
- Academic instruction and assessment standards
- Graduation standards

The Exam is comparable to the GED. Last year 2300 youth passed the test. Many states have stopped using the GED due to the high cost associated.

Children's Division Update:

Julie Lester, Acting Deputy Director gave an update on the following:

- CD is exploring the option of a Career Ladder for field staff.
- The Mobility Project continues, recently field staff who have been involved with the process were able to take the new ipads with them to start some testing. Work continues on the development of applications for the program.
- Patsy Carter, Director of Children's Clinical Services at the Department of Mental Health, has taken a part-time position with CD to develop clinical consultation and trauma based services.
- CD continues to move in the direction of trauma aware/informed services. A home visitor model is being proposed to work with children

ages 0-8, upon entering foster care. Support for resource parents and biological parents are included.

- An MOU is being developed between Work Force Development, Department of Economic Development and Children's Division to bring a customer-service based employment options for eligible youth in foster care. Greene County and St. Louis would be pilot locations.
- Educational Seminars will be developed with Chafee providers and older youth staff, explaining the child's educational rights.
- The number of children in foster care remains just over 12,000.

Policy Updates:

Program Manager, Amy Martin gave an overview of new memos.

[CD13-101](#) Resource Parent Quarterly Home Visit

[CD14-08](#) Introduction of New Form, Notification of Hazards, CD-101

[CD14-17](#) Respite Policy Revision and Training Introduction

Pending memos include:

- Resource Provider Fingerprinting Process
- Medical Services Authorization Information Letter
- Revision of required in-service training requirements for licensed Foster, Relative and Kinship providers

Eric Pilson asked if there was a new policy for foster group homes. Amy explained how CD is evaluating our foster family group home model. Council on Accreditation (COA) currently only has standards for residential homes, thus viewing group homes as residential facilities. Due to continuing discussion regarding the success of homes with more than six children (congregate care or group homes) in meeting the needs of the child, Missouri is exploring family group homes nationally and in the meantime has paused in approving more homes.

CASA:

Beth Dessem, Executive Director of CASA, explained the key components of the CASA/GAL (Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem) volunteer's roles. CASA volunteers are to investigate, facilitate, advocate and monitor. Fundraisers and grants help fund the CASA program as well as a budgeted amount of federal dollars. One staff supervises 30 volunteers, if there is not a program or supervisor in the county, there cannot be volunteers for the program. This program only serves foster children; there are 21 CASA programs in Missouri, serving 22 judicial circuits. Beth gave the Board handouts, for more information visit www.mocasa.net.

Legislative Agenda:

Member, Kelly Schultz, gave an overview of current legislation.

[SB 491](#) Modifies provisions relating to criminal law

[SB 520](#) Modifies the law relating to leave time for state employees who are adoptive and foster parents

[SB 530](#) Allows for drug use or convictions to be considered in determining parental fitness in termination of parental rights proceedings

[SB 802](#) & [HB 1092](#) Extends certain time periods for when child abuse and neglect investigations and determinations shall be made by the Children's Division

[SB 805](#) Allows foster children to contract for automobile insurance

[SB 869](#) Allows for the temporary suspension of adoption subsidies if the child has been removed from the home due to child abuse and neglect

[SB 973](#) Allows the office of the Child Advocate to intervene on behalf of a child during judicial proceedings

[HB 1063](#) Changes the laws regarding children and families

[HB 1555](#) Requires the child abuse and neglect hotline to receive calls regarding elder abuse during the hours the elder abuse and neglect hotline is closed

[HB 1184](#) Allows foster children who are 16 years of age or older to contract for the purchase of automobile insurance with the consent of the Children's Division or the juvenile court

[HB 1541](#) Establishes a pilot program to increase the visitation rights of children with incarcerated parents

[HB 1592](#) Makes the identity of the reporter of three or more unsubstantiated reports of child abuse or neglect admissible in dissolution or child custody proceedings

[HB 2000](#) Establishes the "Foster Children's Bill of Rights"

Election of Officers-Preliminary Discussion:

Members who were originally appointed by the Governor will need to go back to the entity in which nominated them to ask if entity would like them to continue membership on the board. A letter should be drafted and sent to Dean. Board appointed members are not up for re-appointment. Dean requested the Board submit nominations for the three officers in the next 30 days by email (include in email all members and Board email address.) Kelly Schultz motioned the request and Suzie seconded the motion. All members present were in favor, motion passed.

Open Forum:

In-Service training hours for resource parents who train was brought to the attention of the Board. Resource Parents are not receiving in-service hours for

the training they are conducting. Eric feels they should. He explained the training unit would allow for training hours for the time spent on developing the training, through reading of literature to prep for training. The Board asked Eric to bring a write-up to the next meeting outlining the issues.

Foster/Adopt licensing inquires that do not complete an application do not receive a DVN. It is not tracked in FACES. Eric is concerned if there is an issue or concern with the family making the inquiry there is nowhere to document it. Members agreed if the inquiry was a relative or kin specific to a child already in care then the concern would be documented in the child's case. Sarah explained the high volume of inquires CD receives and how typically the family will make multiple inquires before ever filling out an application. Staff are trained to assess the family during the licensing process, including the early stages of inquires and applications. Staff may not know of a particular concern of someone else, however, after assessment they would be able to notice any "red flags" with the family allowing them to speak with family and resolve the concerns or counsel the family out of the program.

Karen felt there is a need for more education in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and the effects. Ellis and Associates has training available and Karen has training that has been approved through the Central Office Training Unit. Karen will send out a flyer to the Board to share with other resource providers who may be interested.

The Foster Parent College is a great online training tool with a wide range of topics to help resource providers. Nickie will send out information on the 2014 Training Extravaganza being held by the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition. Information can be found on their website at <http://www.foster-adopt.org/current-parents/training/>.

Amy will work with the adoption resource centers on establishing a list of resources for children in care. Specifically businesses who provide free or reduced price services for youth in care and the families who care for them, i.e. Silver Dollar City.

Meeting Adjourned:

Dean asked the Board if there was anything further, members said no, he asked for a motion. Kelly motioned to adjourn, Linda seconded the motion and all members present were in favor. Motion passed, meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2014 10a.m.-3p.m. at the Governor's Office Building, room 460, in Jefferson City, MO.