

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

Members in Attendance: Dean Aye, Eric Pilson, Janet Richardson, Kelly Floyd, Nickie Steinhoff, Kelly Schultz, Linda Hosman, Karen Anderson, Michelle Martin, Kim Pate and Lori Ross

Children's Division Support Staff: Julie Lester, Amy Martin, Elizabeth Tattershall and Sarah Bashore

Absent: Suzie Forbis, Derek Williams and Melinda Nicholson

Visitors: Deb Fusek, Santana Figueroa, and Katie Brown

Presenters: Patsy Carter, Director of Children's Clinical Services, Department of Mental Health (DMH) and clinical consultant to the Children's Division (CD), Mark Gutchen, DLS and Christy Collins, CD Central Office

Introductions/Roll Call:

At 10:04 a.m. the meeting began with introductions. Eleven members were present. Kim Pate was introduced as an official member of the Board. Also joining the meeting were Katie Brown, foster parent from St. Louis, Santana Figueroa, intern from Office of Child Advocate and Deb Fusek, Interim Director from Family Matters Resource Center in Springfield Missouri.

Children's Division Update:

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

- CD is working on a Career Ladder for field staff
- The Mobility Project continues, selected testers are currently piloting new apps
- Patsy Carter, Director of Children's Clinical Services is working with CD to develop the MOST program (presented on later in the meeting)

Adoption Information:

Amy Martin provided information to the Board. There are 7000 adoption resource homes, although some have already adopted and are only open to receive subsidy. A number of adoptive families seeking placement is difficult to produce at this time without going through the entire list by hand. This will change once the new adoption function in the Children's Division's FACES system rolls out at the end of the month. With this new function, an accurate number can be given of resource homes who are seeking placement. At the next Board meeting CD should be able to report how many homes are seeking children for adoption. There are currently 12,578 children in foster care. The

number continues to climb for many different reasons. Julie Lester explained one reason is likely due to the turn-over of staff. The CD continues to focus very heavily on staff retention. The Division is working on becoming a Workforce Excellence site with the help of grants through the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI). There are two grants in Missouri, one with University of Missouri Kansas City and one with Missouri State University. The proposal is complete, there will be three sites. CD should know for certain at the end of June if Missouri is selected as a Workforce Excellence site.

There are currently 1,153 children available for adoption. Dean asked if there was push marketing of current AD homes for these children. The CD does use emails to resource parents, the Heart Gallery, AdoptUSKids, the Adoption Exchange, and distribution lists to other resource workers. CD would like to see all AD families registered on the AdoptUSKids website. This would allow staff to view the profiles of the families registered and request home assessments. The first step is to list all children who are available for adoption on the website. Separate from the 1,153, there are 872 children who have a goal of adoption and are currently in a pre-adoptive placement.

The CD is tasked with completing a Diligent Recruitment Plan for both foster and adoptive homes which is part of the Child and Family Services Plan. Amy is interested in obtaining feedback and ideas from the Board. She would like to be on the next agenda to spend more time on the topic.

Staff are often frustrated about the lack of recruitment materials. The materials must be approved by the DSS Communications Officer prior to use. This is currently in the works. Staff state-wide will soon have a variety of recruitment material available to them.

Deb Fusek is involved in a sub-committee on child welfare stemming from the Greene County CA/N Collaborative group. She stated they are currently working on recruitment for the Greene Co area.

Early Screening:

Patsy Carter presented the proposed Missourians Overcoming Separation Trauma (MOST) program. As CD continues to move in the direction of becoming trauma informed and providing consistent services, a 6-week in-home visiting model is being proposed to work with children ages 0-8, upon entering foster care. Support for resource parents and biological parents are included. After the six weeks a screening for chronic trauma will be administered to assess if there is continued trauma which would need to be addressed through other services. Portland State University has done some work on trauma informed practice and has a model. A Trauma Informed Practice Strategies (T.I.P.S.) for Foster Parents was handed out to all present, developed by Portland. For more information on the handout, members were

directed to the bottom of the handout for the email address and phone number of the appropriate contact person. Members asked Patsy if they as resource parents, receive this service once, would they need to go back through it again with the next child they receive placement. Patsy explained after a resource parent goes through this process once, they may not have to go through it again, although the program is very specific to the child's needs. For example an infant child will not have the same separation trauma as a five year old; therefore the services offered by the MOST providers would be different. The program will be available and offered to all children ages 0-8.

The MOST providers will offer one hour a week of in-home services to the resource parent. This was a concern to some of the members of the Board. One hour a week may be a constraint on the family. Nickie suggested training childcare providers as well. Patsy stated there are currently grants being used to train early childhood providers through Department of Health and Senior Services. Other suggestions were for the MOST providers to work evening hours or weekends to accommodate the resource family during time of transition. Dean had concern this program may reduce the number of resource parents interested in accepting placement of children ages 0-8. Patsy explained her hope in having resource parents supporting other resource parents, using the information they were trained on. Staff will be selected in each region, trained in many areas of direct service trauma practice as described on the MOST handout. Patsy and CD will train contracted providers as well. Lori suggested having the MOST providers on location at the time of removal and the resource parent. Lori has had a good experience in accompanying the worker at time of removal on a family she had previously worked with. This practice would be best for resource parents who already have siblings of the child being removed or who have had them before.

There was some concern of not a lot of time being spent on trauma training in the pre-service training STARS even though it has been incorporated since March 2013.

Patsy explained DMH and CD are still working on the details of this model and the suggestions and concerns of the Board were greatly appreciated. The discussion brought up questions the Division will need to consider. Related goals of the Division include having all staff trained on the trauma toolkit, develop a common trauma language, and have secondary trauma training for staff.

Policy Updates:

Elizabeth Tattershall gave an overview of new memos.

[CD14-22](#) New Anti-Human Trafficking Website Released To Law Enforcement

[CD14-23](#) Supervision of Older Youth from Other States in Transitional and Independent Living Situations

[CD14-26](#) Healthcare for Foster Youth

CD14-27 Resource Provider Fingerprinting Process

There is one pending, resource Home Renewal. Explained new process change; memos will now go to supervisors and above first, allowing time for familiarization and training.

ACRB:

Mark Gutchen and Christy Collins were present to discuss the Alternative Care Review Board (ACRB) rule and regulation. The ACRB is to be used when the foster, relative, kinship or adoptive parent disagrees with any decision made by Children's Division (CD) regarding a case management decision involving an alternative care child who is, or has been, in the claimant's physical custody. Christy Collins gave examples of case management decisions. The concern for many on the Board was explained to be an issue involving team decisions. Lori shared an example of how in Jackson County the Family Support Team (FST) is pressured by a particular team member. If the resource parent disagrees with the "team" decision, the Board feels like there should be a process of a non-bias review completed. Ideas for the process included replacing the ACRB or streamlining all grievance processes to one, or creating a multi-disciplinary team to review team decisions. Mark gave an example of a decision which can be reviewed per statute. The resource parent disagrees with the decision of the FST and asks CD to reconvene the FST to discuss and CD says "no". This is an example of what can be grieved and given to the ACRB. There are many concerns from the Board as the resource parent may not have a voice in court (leading to decisions made, not agreed upon by the resource parent) and is not a party to the case, so is often not heard in the court room. The Board still has much to discuss on this topic. They agreed to hold discussion by email and set up a sub-committee.

Adoption Records:

Lori asked for clarification regarding the adoptive parent receiving the child's records prior to the adoption. In Jackson County they used to give an actual copy of the entire file. They are no longer practicing in this manner. Sarah explained in most counties adoptive parents, prior to the adoption, are asked by CD to review the record and take notes of anything they feel is needed for future reference. It is not often CD will make a copy of the entire redacted record and give to the parent. This is time consuming, but it also may be time consuming for the adoptive parent to go through the file. Lori will look more into the process and what would work best based on the statute.

Home Studies:

Dean discussed with the Board his concern for home assessments not acting as a living document. He challenged all members to go home and take a look at their homes assessment to see how accurate it is. Elizabeth explained at each renewal there should be an amendment attached as described in the Child Welfare Manual under Section 6, Chapter 3, Attachment D and E. The

Board was encouraged by CD to read the renewal assessment prior to signing to make sure everything was properly documented.

Legislative Agenda:

Member, Kelly Schultz, gave an overview of legislation of truly agreed to and finally passed:

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

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

[SB 491](#) and [HB 1371](#) Modifies provisions relating to criminal law

[SB 532](#) Allows for relative caregivers, acting under an affidavit, to consent to medical treatment and educational services for a minor child with whom such caregiver lives if consent of the legal parent or guardian cannot be obtained through reasonable efforts

Election of Officers:

Nominations took place with 11 voting members present.

Nominations included:

Dean Aye for Chair

Michelle Martin for Co-Chair

Eric Pilson for Co-Chair

Lori Ross for Secretary

Dean asked if there was a motion, Kelly S. motioned for a slate vote of Chair and Secretary, Nickie seconded the motion, all present were in favor, no one opposed, motioned was carried. Dean and Lori continue their positions as Chair and Secretary.

Discussion of Co-Chair nominations without nominees in the room occurred. Dean asked if there was a motion, Kelly S. motioned for co-chair vote, Kelly F. seconded the motion, two votes were counted for Eric and six votes were counted for Michelle, Dean abstained from voting, motion was carried with Michelle becoming the new Co-Chair.

Dean announced to full Board, Michelle to be new Co-Chair. Lori personally thanked Eric, everyone applauded, for his service to the Board.

Foster Group Homes:

Lori suggested taking the word “group” out of the title of foster group homes. She suggested the title “large family home or extreme foster home.” Kelly S. said she does not know what these homes really look like, she would be interested in having the Board visit the homes prior to discussing the topic. The Board agreed they need more information on what makes a group home

successful. The Board and CD would like to hear what works, what parameters are needed, as well as competencies and guidelines. Most states do not have group homes; they are considered residential homes or facilities. Everyone agreed that developing a plan and presenting it to the Fire Marshall would be the best way to resolve this issue. Amy Martin explained to the Board how she had spoken with the Fire Marshall and felt like after the discussion she would meet again to determine the best option. The Fire Marshall could then be invited to the Board's meeting to discuss. The Board agreed to put together a sub-committee or work group including all the foster family group homes to discuss safety of children, expectations, what it should look like. Lori agreed to develop an invitation, CD to help facilitate.

Open Forum:

Dean received an email, the Juvenile Office standards are being developed and they are asking for a resource parent to participate in this discussion. Dean thought it would be best to open it up to non-members if anyone had suggestions. Nickie suggested someone from her office; she gave the name to Dean. Lori and Kelly S. both said they would be willing to provide information to the person participating.

Kelly S. announced Kate Watson will be joining the Office of Child Advocate.

Heart Gallery books were given out to those members who were interested.

Meeting Adjourned:

Dean asked the Board if there was anything further, members said no, he asked for a motion. Kelly S. motioned to close the meeting, Kelly F. seconded the motion, all were in favor, and meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for September 9th, 2014 10a.m.-3p.m. at the Governor's Office Building, room 460, in Jefferson City, MO.