

Missouri State Foster Care & Adoption Board

Missouri Governor's Office Building
Rom 460
Jefferson City, Missouri

December 06, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Karen Anderson, Linda Hosman, Michelle Martin, Kelly Schultz, Nicki Steinhoff, Derek Williams

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

Absent: Kim Pate, Lori Ross

Guests: Dana Lopez, Crissy Mayberry, Lacey Dyke, John Head, Jody Dishman, Julie Murray, Dawn Caruso

Introductions: Michelle Martin, Board Chair

Meeting was called to order and Michelle Martin welcomed the attendees. Introductions were made along with an overview of the agenda. Michelle distributed the Board's 2015 Annual Report.

From the Desk of the Director: Amy Martin, Program Manager

Tim Decker was unable to attend today's meeting. Amy Martin, program manager for Children's Division, provided agency updates.

Amy shared a diagram draft reflecting the culture of change for the Children's Division that connects the three initiatives- Trauma, Five Domains of Well-being and Signs of Safety, as well as, Team Decision Making with a common nucleus of high performance transformational coaching.

Michelle requested an updated of the Children's Division's reorganization, specifically the loss of resource development workers. The group expressed concerns regarding not having a resource development worker for their home.

Amy initiated discussion regarding moving from the required quarterly in-home resource worker visit to annual visits. The group's unanimous response was extreme concern in retention/support of resources if move this direction. Some of the concerns voiced from the group included:

- The resource development worker is the resource provider's worker. The case manager is the child's worker. The resource development worker is "My worker".
- The case manager does not see the whole family. Their concern/focus is for the child they are case managing. The needs of the resource family are not their concern.
- The resource development worker is a constant to the family, compared to many case managers in the home, so the one resource worker has a full understanding of the home's strengths and needs.
- The resource development worker knows the policy and laws for foster family licensing, the case managers do not.
- The group would like visits from their resource development worker more often than quarterly. For a TFC home, they have a weekly visit from a licensing worker.
- Retention of resource homes will be devastated. This board is a vintage resource parent group and they don't want to lose the minimum of quarterly visits. New providers will be dangling out there with no support.
- They report to be more comfortable talking about home issues with the resource development worker because the worker knows the family; the case manager of a child in the home doesn't.

They have observed if the resource provider discusses home issues with the case manager, the case manager will just move the child.

- The resource development worker presents to understand the local office culture, so they provide better support than what has been observed from case managers.
- There will be a huge learning curve. Case managers do not know STARS competencies, licensing and license renewal procedures or laws about resource homes.
- Who will provide the information about training opportunities and keep track of all license renewal responsibilities? The group fears that many homes will expire due to no resource development worker providing the continuing support and the 90, 60 and 30 day reminders as provided in FACES and in policy.
- They see an increased lack of concern for the resource family and their needs and requirements to maintain a license.

In response to the multitude of expressed concerns about only having a licensing visit one time a year in the home and no resource development worker for support, Amy asked for suggestions on how CD can improve communication to prevent feared outcomes.

Suggestions to consider included:

- Base frequency of the licensing visit on the resource parent's tenure. For example; the initial two years of licensure the home gets the quarterly visit. Next two year licensure period it is a biannual visit. For those licensed over 5 years it is the annual visit.
- Have a Face time/virtual quarterly visit and then an in-home visit on an annual basis.
- Amy asked about the feasibility of a buddy system/mentor program to provide peer support.
- STARS refresher class 6 months after license begin date

One of the concerns discussed included not having a trained individual in the home to address the licensing concerns on the quarterly basis. Also, the license renewal requires an in-home visit to complete the safety inspection, home renewal assessment and other required document signing.

Elizabeth Tattershall provided an update from Yvette Wandrey, Out of Home Investigation (OHI) unit manager, who presented new policy of completing assessments for the resource home reports at the September meeting. The unit began to pilot the assessments on resource homes in a few areas around the state and it seems to be working very well. There will be many changes to make to FACES which they say will be made by January. The unit plans to roll out the assessment track for resource homes policy statewide in January 2017.

Required In-Service Training Policy: Elizabeth Tattershall, Program Development Specialist

Elizabeth provided a copy of policy (Section 6 Chapter 2 Subsection 5) which lists the required in-service training topics. These required training topics were added to policy as a result of directives from several retention and recruitment task force work groups a few years ago. The questions posed to the group for their ideas were; are the topics still relevant and are there other topics that should be considered to be added?

Elizabeth reported that the new Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard PowerPoint training will be added to the required in-service training as well as the RPC Trauma training. The RPC Trauma training will replace the current training materials provided in policy.

The group unanimously agreed that the current topics are all relevant and should remain. Two additional topic suggestions are; Human trafficking, which could wrap around the current Healthy Relationship training requirement and Gender Identity issues (LGBTQ).

Elizabeth also reported that a practice alert is in the approval process to clarify the 30 hour in-service training requirement for license maintenance and license renewal as it pertains to the relative homes non-safety licensing waiver.

Licensed Relative & Kinship families interested in becoming a Foster home for children with whom they have no relationship: Elizabeth Tattershall

Elizabeth provided the policy memo draft that the board first reviewed in January 2015. The board continues to be concerned with eliminating the requirement for a licensed Relative or Kinship provider to complete the entire 27 hours of STARS pre-service training. The concern includes that many licensed foster homes would like a refresher of the 27 hours of STARS after they have been licensed for a period of time because the information provided makes more sense now that they have had children in their home.

The discussion concluded with Amy's suggestion that a workgroup be formed to discuss further.

WORKING LUNCH

Previously revoked foster home licenses policy: Elizabeth Tattershall

Elizabeth provided a draft copy of the memo clarifying in policy the process when a resource home applicant has a revoked or denied license or approval in FACES. One suggestion offered was to add specific wording that the previously revoked or denied license means the home is not eligible for any state or federal funds for monthly maintenance payment and not about child-specific compensation of childcare, clothing or respite. Elizabeth responded she would add clarification to the memo.

Foster Youth Records and Reports for Resource Parents: Elizabeth Tattershall

In response to the topic of discussion at the September meeting regarding resource parents not being provided court reports and what resource parents should do with foster youth records and reports when the foster youth leaves their home, Elizabeth created a policy memo and emailed to the board a few weeks ago. At today's meeting a revised version including comments from the board, was provided for discussion. The board provided verbal approval of the finished document.

Transitional Parenting Support System: Michelle Martin

Mary Stutterheim attended the September meeting. In response, she sent a letter to Tim Decker proposing a transitional parenting support system for children transitioning from residential care to home. Tim requested that the proposal be shared with the board. A rich discussion concluded that there needs to be improvement of transitions from placement to placement in general.

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Proposed Rule: Michelle Martin/Amy Martin

The current working draft of the proposed rule was emailed to the board November 14, 2016 for review and comment. A paper copy of the document was provided today for discussion.

There is still a problem in some areas of the state where workers are requiring babysitters to be fingerprinted. Kelly Schultz reports that is the issue that her office receives the most reports. The posting of photos on Face Book continues to be a struggle as well. In general, the group reports that there is evidence of a continued growing acceptance of the standard.

Board Vacancies: Michelle Martin

Michelle reports that she spoke to the State Boards and Commissioner's office. Those attendees with applications submitted do not need to reapply. Individuals are encouraged to wait to submit any new applications until after the transition of the new administration in mid-January 2017. Derek reports that he sent a letter to the new Governor's transition team notifying the team of the board's vacancies.

Regional Topics:

Kansas City:

Linda Hosman reports there are often problems with timely changes of information in FACES which create issues regarding insurance, specifically for adopted children.

Southwest:

Dana Lopez requested clarification about the new mandated reporter on-line reporting. Elizabeth emailed the group the flyer introducing the new option to make non-emergency mandated reports on line. Amy led an informative discussion.

John Head discussed concerns about excessive time before a resource parent is informed about conclusion of CA/N reports. He observes a lack of communication and difficulty connecting with the investigator. Amy offered that he should contact the Circuit Manager when communication is stagnate and if he continues to have issues call the Constituent Unit.

Northwest:

Derek Williams expressed concern about the practice in his area to make a safety plan versus placement in foster care; placed at grandparents as diversion instead of taking into care and placing with grandparents as a relative placement. Amy explained that the TDM (Team Decision Making) process provides for making a plan so decisions are made in the best interest of the child.

Northeast:

Karen Anderson reported issues of resource parents not being reimbursed the sales tax when they submit receipts for clothing purchased for foster youth. This is not correct practice. Elizabeth will address the error with DFAS requesting that unit to return payment requests to the local office when the payment request does not include the entire cost of the clothing purchase including sales tax. Visitor Jody Dishman shared a sibling separation issue regarding the CD staff stating that TPR severs the sibling relationship. That is incorrect information. A parent's TPR does not sever the siblings' relationship to each other.

Office of Child Advocate:

Kelly Schultz explained that since she is appointed by the Governor, she may not be re-appointed with the new administration.

Michelle reminded the group to practice frequent communication with each other between scheduled meetings. She encouraged being pro-active about issues.

Meeting was Adjourn by Michelle Martin.

Next Meeting: March 7, 2017
 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
 205 Jefferson, 10th floor Conference Room B
 Jefferson City, MO

2017 Meeting Dates

March 7, 2017
June 6, 2017
September 5, 2017
December 5, 2017