

A young girl with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a light blue dress with a white floral pattern and a white flower in her hair, is running joyfully across a grassy field. She has a wide, open-mouthed smile. The background is a lush green park with large trees and a wooden fence in the distance.

Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board

2012
Annual Report

1

Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board Annual Report 2012

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Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board

January 31, 2013

The Honorable Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor of the State of Missouri

Dear Honorable Governor Nixon,

I am pleased to present the 2013 Annual Report of activities conducted by the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board. The report covers the time frame from January 1, 2012-December 31, 2012.

This board was created in statute during the 2011 legislative session, and members were appointed by your office during this report year. Senate confirmation of the members is currently underway.

I was honored to be appointed to this position and to be elected by my peers on the board to serve as the board's Chairperson.

The board has worked hard this year to establish itself in compliance with statute, and to perform the duties assigned. I believe that you will be pleased with the progress we've made.

We look forward to continuing the work we've begun and working together with you to improve Missouri's foster care and adoption systems.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Dean Aye". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Dean Aye, Chairman,
Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board

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History

Missouri has a rich history of foster and adoptive parent engagement at the both the systems and local levels. By the 1980's, several foster parent support groups existed across the state. Their missions were founded in the belief that foster and adoptive parents have difficult jobs and a variety of supports and services are needed to retain them as a crucial component of the state's child welfare system.

In 1986, Assistant Deputy Director of Children's Services Richard Matt championed the creation of a statewide advisory committee, whereby representatives from the various foster parent groups could come together to express concerns and ideas to the department's policy staff. The first quarterly meeting of the Missouri Foster Care Advisory Committee was convened by the Deputy Director of Children's Services in December, 1986. Present were eleven (11) foster parents representing different geographic locations and five (5) senior staff from the Division of Family Services (DFS).

The advisory committee prioritized a number of topics considered significant by foster families. These included foster parent recruitment and retention, liability insurance, training, respite care grievance procedure, foster care licensing rules, and medical payments. Quarterly meetings to address these and other important topics were supported and facilitated by Children's Services. When a Governor's Executive Order reorganized the department in 2003, quarterly meetings were continued by the newly formed Children's Division within the Department of Social Services.

Recognizing the importance and involvement of all resource families, the advisory committee changed its working title to State Foster Care and Adoption Advisory Board in 2007. The expanded group continued to serve in advisory capacity to the Children's Division. The ongoing dialogue and input was vital in enhancing the working relationship between the department and foster/adoptive parents statewide. Delegate members were a powerful communication arm, sharing critical information with their member groups scattered across the state. By 2008, the state advisory board began routinely reviewing all foster parent policy revisions for comment prior to publication.

A number of important policy developments came about as a result of feedback from the advisory board over the years. Of particular note was the recognition of foster parents as part of the professional team, and support by the department of the professional parenting fee as part of the reimbursement structure. Continuing to advance the status of the advisory board and its contribution remained critical to the group.

During the 2011 legislative session, the passage of HB431 formalized the creation of the

Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board within the Department of Social Services, under Revised Missouri Statute 210.617, August 28, 2012. Established to provide consultation and assistance to the department, the board's authority exists to provide an independent review of the children's division policies and procedures related to the provision of foster care and adoption in Missouri. The board shall also determine the nature and content of in-service training which shall be provided to foster and adoptive parents in order to improve the provision of foster care and adoption services to children statewide consistent with section 210.566.

Governor Jay Nixon announced appointments to the Board on June 1, 2012. What began as an advisory committee developed by Children's Services in the 1980's has now grown to a Governor appointed Board, dedicated to review of and input on state policies and in-service training impacting the state's foster/adopt community.

Operation of the Board

The Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board is staffed by a liaison from the Missouri Children's Division. This liaison, currently Elizabeth Tattershall, provides organizational support, assists in scheduling meeting locations, and updates the board on policy changes by quarter.

The Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board does not have an operating budget. The board's minimal expenses (mileage reimbursement and meals) are accounted for and procured by the Missouri Children's Division per statute.

Organizational Structure

Board members are appointed to represent each of the seven historical Children's Division regions of the state. On June 1, 2012 Governor Nixon announced the appointment of eight foster/adoptive parent members to the Missouri State Foster Care & Adoption Board. They are:

Dean Aye	Southeast	Melinda Nicholson	Southwest
Dawn Caruso	Southeast	Eric Pilson	Southwest
Kelly Floyd	St Louis County	Janet Richardson	Kansas City
Suzie Forbis	Northeast	Derek Williams	Northwest

Three additional members have subsequently been approved as voting members of the Board as allowed by statute. They are:

Lori Ross	Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association
Kelly Schultz	Office of the Child Advocate
Nickie Steinhoff	Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

Regular board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of March, June, September, and December. The election of officers occurred at the inaugural meeting in June.

Dean P. Aye	Chairperson
Eric Pilson	Co-Chair
Lori Ross	Secretary

Officers serve a two-year term, and will be elected at the June meeting.

Special mid-quarter planning sessions have been held to allow for the development of bylaws, to outline the roles and responsibilities of members, and to provide additional training for members.

Ongoing training of board members has included a seminar on Data Availability & Management and another on Legal Aspects of Foster Care.



Demographic Information:

Region	A	B	C	D	E
KC	1772	520	397	193	247
NE	2385	985	229	247	285
NW	1043	535	111	165	198
SE	1491	617	210	222	269
SL	614	212	120	66	181
SLCO	805	561	163	132	215
SW	3015	1344	550	481	207
Other		21		15	508
State	11125	4894	1780	1558	2110

A Number of Legal Status 1 (children in foster care) children in MO on 12/31/12.

B Number of active Foster Home, Relative Home and Kinship Home licenses on 12/31/12

C Number of Children with Adoption as the goal on 12/31/12

D Number of licensed FH, RH and KH vendors that also have an active AD (adoption) approval

E Number of approved AD (adoption) only vendors

* Active Foster Home licenses defined as unduplicated count of licensed Career Foster , Foster Adopt, Foster family Group, Foster Home, Relative Home and Kinship Home vendors (regardless of private agency status)

Statutory Responsibilities

RSMo 210.617 creates three primary statutory responsibilities for the members of the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board. These responsibilities are:

1. The board shall provide consultation and assistance to the department,
2. The board shall draft and provide an independent review of the children's division policies and procedures related to the provision of foster care and adoption in Missouri, and
3. The board shall determine the nature and content of in-service training which shall be provided to foster and adoptive parents in order to improve the provision of foster care and adoption services to children statewide.

Consultation and Assistance

Members of the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board review Children's Division efforts related to the provision of foster care and adoption at each quarterly meeting. Administrators with the Division provide updates on current internal and external work groups and committees and solicit information and participation from the board members. Board members are represented on almost all functioning child welfare work groups and committees. Additionally, the chairman of the board confers with the Children's Division administration regularly.

Draft and Provide Independent Review of Policy

Members of the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board have reviewed 9 Proposed policies during this calendar year. Board members independently review policy and suggestions are collated into a draft response. Board members arrive at a draft consensus opinion, which is then shared with the Children's Division. Children's Division written responses are provided to each Policy Review.

Determine the Nature and Content of In-Service Training

Members of the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board have worked extensively with the Children's Division to create effective policy around in-service training. Additionally, the board considers national trends and research on abused and neglected children in order to suggest new topics and curriculum for resource provider training.

Policy Reviews conducted

by the MSFCAB in 2012:

1. Policy revision to adoption staffing process
4-11-2012
2. Revisions to recruitment policy
6-4-2012
3. Release of information policy review
6-18- 2012
4. Transportation reimbursement process revision
8-16-2012
5. Older youth non-owner insurance policy
8-22-2012
6. Resource parent quarterly home visit checklist and
summary
9-12-2012
7. Subsidy case closure memo
9-10-2012
8. Rollover training credit
10-8-2012
9. In-Service Training Policy
12-11-2012

Acknowledgements

The Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board wishes to thank Governor Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon and the General Assembly for their support.

Appreciation is also expressed to the Department of Social Services, and the Children's Division, including Director Candace Shively.

Finally, we wish to express our respect, admiration and appreciation for the foster, kinship and adoptive families of the State of Missouri, who work daily to assure the safety, care and well-being of Missouri's most at risk children and youth. We are honored to represent and serve you.

Missouri Revised Statutes
Chapter 210
Child Protection and Reformation
Section 210.617

August 28, 2012

Missouri state foster care and adoption board created, duties, members, expenses, meetings--written annual report, when.

210.617. 1. There is hereby created within the department of social services the "Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board", which shall provide consultation and assistance to the department and shall draft and provide an independent review of the children's division policies and procedures related to the provision of foster care and adoption in Missouri. Additionally, the board shall determine the nature and content of in-service training which shall be provided to foster and adoptive parents in order to improve the provision of foster care and adoption services to children statewide consistent with section 210.566. The board shall be comprised of foster and adoptive parents as follows:

(1) Two members from each of the seven children's division areas within the department of social services delineated as follows:

- (a) The northwest region;
- (b) The northeast region;
- (c) The southeast region;
- (d) The southwest region;
- (e) The Kansas City region;
- (f) The St. Louis area region;
- (g) The St. Louis City region;

(2) Area members shall be appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate, based upon recommendations by regional foster care and adoption boards, or other similar entities.

2. Statewide foster care and adoption association representatives shall be voting members of the board as approved by the board.

3. All members of the board shall serve for a term of at least two years. Members may be reappointed to the board by their entities for consecutive terms. All vacancies on the board shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term in the same manner in which the board membership which is vacant was originally filled.

4. Each member of the board may be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred by the member in performance of his or her official duties. All reimbursements made under this subsection shall be made from funds within the department of social services' children's division budget.

5. All business transactions of the board shall be conducted in public meetings in accordance with sections 610.010 to 610.030.

6. The board shall elect officers from the membership consisting of a chairperson, co-chairperson, and secretary. Officers shall serve for a term of two years. The board may elect such other officers and establish such committees as it deems appropriate.

7. The board shall establish such procedures necessary to:

- (1) Review children's division proposed policy and provide written opinions and recommendations for change to the children's division within thirty days of receipt of the proposed policy;
- (2) Provide draft policy suggestions, at the request of the children's division or in response to issues by the board, to the children's division for improvements in foster care or adoption practice; and
- (3) Fulfill its statutory requirement in accordance with section 210.566 to determine the content of in-service training to be provided by the children's division to foster and adoptive parents.

8. The board shall provide to the director of the department of social services, the governor, the office of the child advocate, and upon request, members of the general assembly, a written report of annual activities conducted and made.

9. The board shall exercise its powers and duties independently of the children's division within the department of social services in order to ensure partnership and accountability in the provision of services to the state's children affected by abuse and neglect. Budgetary, procurement, and accounting functions shall continue to be performed by the children's division

Missouri Revised Statutes
Chapter 210
Child Protection and Reformation
Section 210.566

August 28, 2012

Foster parents' bill of rights.

210.566. 1. (1) The children's division and its contractors, recognizing that foster parents are not clients but rather are colleagues in the child welfare team, shall treat foster parents in a manner consistent with the National Association of Social Workers' ethical standards of conduct as described in its Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues. Foster parents shall treat the children in their care, the child's birth family and members of the child welfare team in a manner consistent with their ethical responsibilities as professional team members.

(2) The children's division and its contractors shall provide written notification of the rights enumerated in this section at the time of initial licensure and at the time of each licensure renewal following the initial licensure period.

2. (1) The children's division and its contractors shall provide foster parents with regularly scheduled opportunities for preservice training, and regularly scheduled opportunities for pertinent inservice training, as determined by the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Advisory Board.

(2) The children's division and its contractors shall provide to foster parents and potential adoptive parents, prior to placement, all pertinent information, including but not limited to full disclosure of all medical, psychological, and psychiatric conditions of the child, as well as information from previous placements that would indicate that the child or children may have a propensity to cause violence to any member of the foster family home. The foster parents shall be provided with any information regarding the child or the child's family, including but not limited to the case plan, any family history of mental or physical illness, sexual abuse of the child or sexual abuse perpetrated by the child, criminal background of the child or the child's family, fire-setting or other destructive behavior by the child, substance abuse by the child or child's family, or any other information which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and to protect the foster or adoptive family. Knowingly providing false or misleading information to foster parents in order to secure placement shall be denoted in the caseworker's personnel file and shall be kept on record by the division.

(3) The children's division and its contractors shall arrange preplacement visits, except in emergencies.

(4) The foster parents may ask questions about the child's case plan, encourage a placement or refuse a placement without reprisal from the caseworker or agency. After a placement, the children's division and its contractors shall update the foster parents as new information about the child is gathered.

(5) Foster parents shall be informed in a timely manner by the children's division and its contractors of all team meetings and staffings concerning their licensure status or children placed in their homes, and shall be allowed to participate, consistent with section 210.761.

(6) The children's division and its contractors shall establish reasonably accessible respite care for children in foster care for short periods of time, jointly determined by foster parents and the child's caseworker pursuant to section 210.545. Foster parents shall follow all procedures established by the children's division and its contractors for requesting and using respite care.

(7) Foster parents shall treat all information received from the children's division and its contractors about the child and the child's family as confidential. Information necessary for the medical or psychiatric care of the child may be provided to the appropriate practitioners. Foster parents may share information necessary with school personnel in order to secure a safe and appropriate education for the child. Additionally, foster parents shall share information they may learn about the child and the child's family, and concerns that arise in the care of the child, with the caseworker and other members of the child welfare team. Recognizing that placement changes are difficult for children, foster parents shall seek all necessary information, and participate in preplacement visits whenever possible, before deciding whether to accept a child for placement.

3. (1) Foster parents shall make decisions about the daily living concerns of the child, and shall be permitted to continue the practice of their own family values and routines while respecting the child's cultural heritage. All discipline shall be consistent with state laws and regulations. The children's division shall allow foster parents to help plan visitation between the child and the child's siblings or biological family. Visitations should be scheduled at a time that meets the needs of the child, the biological family members, and the foster family whenever possible. Recognizing that visitation with family members is an important right of children in foster care, foster parents shall be flexible and cooperative with regard to family visits.

(2) Foster parents shall provide care that is respectful of the child's cultural identity and needs. Recognizing that

cultural competence can be learned, the children's division and their contractors shall provide foster parents with training that specifically addresses cultural needs of children, including but not limited to, information on skin and hair care, information on any specific religious or cultural practices of the child's biological family, and referrals to community resources for ongoing education and support.

(3) Foster parents shall recognize that the purpose of discipline is to teach and direct the behavior of the child, and ensure that it is administered in a humane and sensitive manner. Foster parents shall use discipline methods which are consistent with children's division policy.

4. (1) Consistent with state laws and regulations, the children's division and its contractors shall provide, upon request by the foster parents, information about a child's progress after the child leaves foster care.

(2) Except in emergencies, foster parents shall be given two weeks advance notice and a written statement of the reasons before a child is removed from their care. When requesting removal of a child from their home, foster parents shall give two weeks advance notice, consistent with division policy, to the child's caseworker, except in emergency situations.

(3) Recognizing the critical nature of attachment for children, if a child reenters the foster care system and is not placed in a relative home, the child's former foster parents shall be given first consideration for placement of the child.

(4) If a child becomes free for adoption while in foster care, the child's foster family shall be given preferential consideration as adoptive parents consistent with section 453.070.

(5) If a foster child becomes free for adoption and the foster parents desire to adopt the child, they shall inform the caseworker within sixty days of the caseworker's initial query. If they do not choose to pursue adoption, foster parents shall make every effort to support and encourage the child's placement in a permanent home, including but not limited to providing information on the history and care needs of the child and accommodating transitional visitation.

5. Foster parents shall be informed by the court no later than two weeks prior to all court hearings pertaining to a child in their care, and informed of their right to attend and participate, consistent with section 211.464.

6. The children's division and their contractors shall provide access to a fair and impartial grievance process to address licensure, case management decisions, and delivery of service issues. Foster parents shall have timely access to the child placement agency's appeals process, and shall be free from acts of retaliation when exercising the right to appeal.

7. The children's division and their contractors shall provide training to foster parents on the policies and procedures governing the licensure of foster homes, the provision of foster care, and the adoption process. Foster parents shall, upon request, be provided with written documentation of the policies of the children's division and their contractors. Per licensure requirements, foster parents shall comply with the policies of the child placement agency.

8. For purposes of this section, "foster parent" means a resource family providing care of children in state custody.