



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

Summary of Subcommittee Meeting

Subcommittee Committee:

Child and Family Services	11:00 - 12:30 pm
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Date: Thursday, June 23, 2022

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Facilitator: Sandra McBrayer

Meeting Staff: Emily Lay, Stephanie Heying

Child and Family Services Subcommittee Summary: 50 attendees took part in the Subcommittee.

Advisory Members Participating: Sandra Mueller, Patty Boles, Jessica Heldman, Cheryl Rode, Carolyn Griesemer, Simone Hidds-Monroe, Adam Reed, Melissa Villagomez

I, II, III. Sandra McBrayer opened the meeting and provided a brief overview of the agenda. She explained how the meeting was being conducted via the Zoom platform and encouraged participation.

IV. Ombudsman Update

Sandra introduced Christy Carlson from the County of San Diego. Christy then shared the below update:

- Introduction
 - Compliance Officer for the County of San Diego
 - Focus on independent reviews, citizen complaints, and escalation of concerns
 - Shared professional background and education
 - Shared Compliance Office review process
 - Shared Compliance Office metrics
- Questions and comments on the Ombudsman Update:
 - A participant asked how the Ombudsman agency could be separate from CWS when the funding component is the same. Christy responded that funding for the Ombudsman agency comes from the General Fund, meaning the funding source is different than CWS' funding.
 - A participant suggested the group be given data on number of complaints received by the Ombudsman. He stated that the group is looking for an Ombudsman that is separate from CWS and HHSA. He also expressed concerns that many children and families, specifically children and families of color, do not feel comfortable discussing concerns or complaints with CWS.
 - A participant asked how to start the complaint process, as there is often confusion as to who should be contacted. He also asked how complaints can be addressed in real-time vs. correcting the complaint for the next case. Christy explained the types of elements typically handled by the Compliance Office. She expressed that any calls that come to the Compliance Office will be addressed.

- A participant asked if a hotline call is made, should a separate report be made to the Ombudsman? Elly Chung responded that all hotline calls are cross-referenced.
- A member of the Advisory Board asked for clarification on how to start the complaint process, who to contact, which agency is the first point of contact, etc.? Elly responded that the process typically goes through whichever agency is currently working on the case. She stated that during the review process, cases are elevated as necessary.
- A member of the Advisory Board suggested the flyer for the Ombudsman office be clarified more by adding additional contact information and information on where individuals can go to start the complaint process. She asked if youth already in the system would follow the same complaint process as those who are just entering the system. Elly responded there is an Ombudsman at the state level that current and former foster youth can contact to begin the complaint process.
- A participant suggested adding the state Ombudsman's information to the flyer for clarity.
- A participant asked if the Compliance Office is available to Resource Families. Christy responded that any client of San Diego County is welcome to contact the Compliance Office.
- A member of the Advisory Board stated that attorneys give every client a comprehensive packet with information regarding who to contact for what issue. Another member of the Advisory Board asked if youth who are emancipated also receive this information.

V. Update on Workgroup Recommendation – Placement Recommendations

Sandra opened the agenda item and passed it on to Diana Macis from CWS. Diana then shared the below update:

- Implementation of a Specialty Program Placement Unit
 - Utilizing staff with experience related to Adoption, Native American communities and Short-term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP.)
 - Dedicated team to screen STRTP's throughout the state to meet clients' individual needs.
 - Eliminates duplication of work.
 - Focuses on family placement settings.
 - Increased diversions from Polinsky Children's Center (PCC).
- Quality Parenting Outreach:
 - San Diego one of 7 counties in nation to participate in year long pilot.
 - It was a texting platform that surveys resource families to obtain feedback
 - 12 surveys were sent via text messages to resource parents within the county.
 - Survey results have been used by CWS to improve services.
- Questions and comments on the Placement Recommendations:
 - A participant stated the number of placement options are limited for youth and there is a need for additional placement options.
 - A member of the Advisory Board stated due to Federal guidelines, STRTP's cannot have more than 16 beds, further limiting placement options for youth.
 - A participant asked about to learn more about being involved in the respite program Diana responded there is information on the CWS website, and she added information in the chat.
 - A member of the Advisory Board stated that there is an opportunity to promote respite care providers.

VI. Follow-Up Information from Last Meeting

- Sandra opened the agenda item and passed it on to Balambal Bharti from CWS to discuss Length of PCC placement before going to a STRTP. Balambal then shared the below update:

Length of PCC placement before going to a STRTP

- Approximately 59% of children/youth stayed between 1-10 days at PCC
- Approximately 31% of children/youth stayed more than 10 days at PCC
- Questions and comments on the length of PCC placement before going to a STRTP
 - A participant asked for clarification on the difference between Resource Family and Resource Home.
 - A member of the Advisory Board asked for clarification regarding Relatives vs. NREFM. Balambal stated that NREFM are not related to the youth in their placement.
 - A participant asked for data regarding children/youth that stay more than 10 days at PCC.
 - A participant stated that not all youth go through PCC for placement. He also stated that the approval process to become a Resource Family is long and burdensome.

How do services follow children and youth who have been at Polinsky?

Sandra passed it on to Diana Macis and Sarah Glass to discuss how services follow children and youth who have been at Polinsky. Diana and Sarah then shared the below update:

- CWS assesses the individual needs for each child or youth to determine what services are needed.
- CWS does referrals while the children/youth are at PCC. Unfortunately, some services often have long waitlists, delaying services for children/youth in placement.
- There is sometimes a delay between referrals and delivery of services. The delay of start of services is frequently longer than the stay at PCC due to the 10 day limit.
- Questions and comments:
 - A member asked how to ensure services are received in a timely and consistent manner. She suggested data on services with the longest waitlists be provided to the Full Advisory Board for a recommendation to expand or fund services.
 - A member of the Advisory Board suggested Family's First Services and Prevention Act rollout is supposed to support more prevention-based services. She mentioned that data regarding tracking for services with waitlists is inconsistent and needs to be improved.
 - A participant suggested DSEP data on length of time from referral to receipt of services be provided.

Fostering Academy Success in Education

Due to time constraints, the agenda item has been moved to the August agenda.

Sandra concluded the meeting by reviewing items that will be discussed during the August meeting.

- August: Practice Improvement Recommendation
- Additional information from the Polinsky PowerPoint
 - Better understanding of the Resource Family vs. Resource Home on the slide
 - A better understanding of the relative/NFREM: emergency approvals or different approval process from Resource Families
 - A clearer breakdown for the 31% of children and youth who stay more than 10 days at PCC
- Fostering Academy Success in Education
- Update on Family's First rollout and implementation

Sandra then reminded everyone of the upcoming full advisory board meeting occurring on Friday, July 8th at 9:00 am.

VII. Next Meeting: August 25, 2022, 11:00 am