

# FOSTER CARE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 9, 2020

Webex Conference Call

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

**Present:** Diana Macis, Barbara Wojtach, Claire Lynch-Dwight, Donna Alexander, Alex Kahn, Antonia Torres, Belinda Radovich, Dannette Shevlin, Debbie Stolz, Diana Shreckengost, Doralina Tichy, Emma Tidmore, Fatimah Abdullah, Jennifer Zapanta, Gloria Escamilla-Huidor, Kimberly Washington, Lodia Ruiz, Mai Woo, Mary Jo Meer, Matthew Ray, Natasha Hood, Suzanne Thompson, Valesha Bullock, Veronica Sarabia, Mary Mackenzie, Isela Hernandez, Josie Lewis, Veronica Miller, Nicole Kelsay, Paloma Martinez, Margo Fudge, Monica Samano, Rosa Ventura, Collette Best, Mary Ann Paschal, Melissa Brooks

**I. Chair: Diana Macis called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.**

**II. Approval of Agenda/Minutes: Minutes for March 12<sup>th</sup> were approved.**

**III. Updates and Discussion:**

### **North County Foster Parent Association- Debbie Stolz for Patty Boles**

- No one is in the store right now, they're hunkered down just trying to make sure the resource parents have their needs met.
- Patty is doing kid packs, so if you need anything from the store she'll get the items together and make arrangements so it can be placed outside the shop.

### **HHSA/Child Welfare Services- Valesha Bullock**

- Trying to adhere to visitation procedures and ensure everyone is safe. Forecasting on how we can continue to do business. Our mandate is to make contact with the child, whether it is one the phone, video conference or face to face.
- If you have any issues come up, feel free to contact the PSW and/or their supervisor to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Anticipating that the courts will re-open but they're reassessing which hearings will be heard. Right now they're doing virtual emergency hearings only.
- We're not doing orientations and trying to figure out how to continue providing training to our resource parents.
- Our county emergency office is in full service right now and we're providing them information on our daily operations. We're under the Covid-19 disaster arena, so Kim Giardina now has all regions until further notice. Working on providing consistent messaging to staff. Alfredo Guardado and Mitsuru Ramirez are leads for regional components and every region has a section chief. County wide programs are still under Kim Giardina and Alice Kennedy, Adoptions, RFA, Residential, PCC and Extended Foster Care and Policy.

### **San Diego Foster Parent Association- Mary Jo Meer**

- Who can we email in regard to homes that haven't received payment yet? Maybe the kid left early and those checks haven't been processed yet.
- PSWs don't fully understand how to properly conduct a Zoom call with young children.
- Concerns about when we eventually return to face to face visits, the child that returns might have to be quarantined from the rest of the family.
- Seems like parents are happy with the Grossmont trainings and being able to interact with county staff.
- Debra added that a lot of our families are not working, so we need to be cognizant of their payments. Also single parents are not able to go out for groceries, etc. without taking the kids with them. We're suggesting they use Respite. Are there other resources? Diana said her KIDSLine staff is referring families to 211 who is able to refer families to different resources.

**Child Welfare Services Policy & Program Support- Veronica Sarabia**

- We're working to get together all the information that needs to go out to staff and caregivers.
- Alex- We did extend the contract with Maxim due to all the unknown changes to ensure there were no negative impacts to anyone. We have relaxed some of the Respite requirements.
- From March 13-current, we have a total of 12 requests/ 675 hours.

**Foster Care Eligibility- Mai Woo**

- Our staff are still working, still processing payments, doing change of placements, etc. You may call the inquiry line if payments are late, Medi-Call issues or you have other questions. 619-767-5000.

**Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP)- Claire Lynch-Dwight**

- The majority of our foster care nurses have been pulled for COVID activity.
- Dental appointments are emergencies only. Rady is looking into doing telehealth appointments. If you have an appointment currently scheduled check with your Drs office to see if you should keep it.

**Polinsky Children's Center (PCC)- Nicole Kelsay**

- Robin Thompson retired last month, so we have Elizabeth Rosas, new PSS, starting 4/10.
- Last month we had 92 children and today we have 49. 15 kids are under age 5. We've been able to move kids out at the same rate, but due to Covid-19 we haven't been taking as many in.
- To prevent the spread we're screening all incoming kids. All kids are having temperatures checked twice a day by nursing staff. We're isolating incoming kids for 14 days in a separate cottage until we can safely integrate them. If any show symptoms they are moved into isolations rooms or we will open assessment center space.
- If you are planning on picking up a child or interested in placement a child that's here, schedule a pre-placement visit so we can make sure the visitation space isn't too crowded. We can even set up something online or on the phone. Call the visitation staff at 858-874-1131 or 858-874-1081.

**Developmental Screening and Enhancement Program (DSEP)- Veronica Miller**

- Our developmental and behavior specialist are working remotely. With the permission of the county we're completing screenings over the phone if the family is able to do so.
- Please don't decline visits, this is a contractual requirement, we still have to get the screenings done for kids.

**Foster Home Licensing/Resource Family Approval (RFA)- Valesha Bullock for Natasha Hood**

- We are only conducting emergency response type of referrals at this time. Our primary goal is to divert from PCC. We're making sure we're implementing social distancing and trying to figure out how we can continue to do business in regard to buildings and grounds and the requirements that are mandated by the written directives.
- RFA Duty Line: 858-650-5876

**Foster & Adoptive Resource Family Services (FARFS)/QPI – Diana Macis**

- Had to cancel the QPI Appreciation Banquet and QPI conference so more to come on that.
- QPI is hosting several free webinars. If you register, they'll give us the names of participants. Virtual visitation with young children was a recent training.
- Arleth Rubio will be the new supervisor for recruitment and retention. Jennifer Doud had her baby.
- We're adjusting to our new work life. Retention staff is calling caregivers to make sure they have resources that they need, checking the KIDSLine every day too.
- What are the recommendations for RFA families with children from out of county placements for home visits with SWs from that county? Diana: That caregiver would need to check with that county to check their protocols.
- Valesha- Southern counties are trying to be cognizant of the visitation process across county lines. What we're all doing is allowing one social worker to do multiple visits in a county to alleviate the need for multiple people coming to people's homes. Contact your worker's supervisor if you feel you're not getting the response that you need.

### **San Diego County Independent Living Skills- Doralina Tichy**

- We're doing our best to serve and support the youth from a distance and virtually. We're not sure if we're going to do a graduation event yet. Just trying to do our best.

### **Maxim- Paloma Martinez**

- Were still providing respite care so feel free to use the hours. We're working from home but available 24 hours. Please call us even if it is a last minute request.

### **Comprehensive Assessment & Stabilization Services (CASS)- Daisy**

- We're still providing services and we're seeing high risk kids but outdoors or in open spaces. Converted a lot of appointments to telehealth for the older kids able to use it.
- What would be the protocol if single parents contract the virus? What is the recommendation for them?  
Diana: Notify the SW. We're assessing case by case how to handle the situation. Valesha: We're dealing with this on a daily basis. Let the SW or supervisor know if there has been exposure. We're working with the family closely to see if there is any support, family, etc. Ask about kids being tested, etc. The county has had services through EOC that have been helpful. Families have come up with their own creative ways as well. We're doing our best to not cause any disruptions but do still have to answer to the court and keep everyone's needs in mind.

### **Grossmont College Foster & Adoptive Kinship Care Education Program – Barbara Wojtach**

- Cancelled all in-person classes from March 13-Apr 30. Started a process to get up to speed with Zoom. We've had 3 online classes, they've gone well with great responses. Caregivers like the online format and between now and the end of April we have 16 classes and support groups scheduled.
- Not doing any Adoptions classes or TIPS.

## **Child Welfare Services Placement Specialists-All Regions**

### **North- Martha Mackenzie**

- We have 17 kids at PCC, a lot with behavioral challenges so we're struggling to place them.
- We had a good time with our virtual QPI, it worked out very well.

### **N. Central- Josie Lewis**

- We've been successful with diverting our kids, some have gone to RFA homes. We're having trouble with a sibling group of 3.

### **Central- Isela Hernandez**

- We're still having a lot of kids coming into custody. A lot of parents aren't taking placements because they are scared of the virus. We have been lucky to divert 4 kids from PCC.

### **South- Belinda Radovich**

- We're teleworking, trying to keep one person in the office, checking voicemail constantly to make sure we're not missing calls.
- Referring to the pilot program for caregivers having trouble.
- We have 5 kids at PCC, 4 are teens

### **YMCA Kinship Support Services- Melissa Brooks**

- Our navigators are still taking referrals, providing support and resources. Virtually, by phone, and by Zoom.
- Will try virtual support groups next week through Zoom
- Respite is on hold since the YMCA branches are closed.
- Debra wanted to bring up that the mentors are available. What we need is the emergency placements. There was little information, no funding, etc. If they need a mentor for the emergency placements they should reach out. Mentors 1-800-200-1222.

### **YMCA Emergency Child Care Bridge Program –Lodia Ruiz**

- Childcare is still open so we are still accepting referrals. Doing everything virtually but trying to conduct business as usual.
- We are accepting school aged referrals during this time so if resource parents need childcare for school aged children there are providers that are willing to provide it.
- All of our in-person trainings have been cancelled as well, but we are starting training on Zoom.
- Trying to support child care providers with their hygiene and sanitation products so we got approval to spend funds on cleaning supplies.

### **Adoptions- Gloria Escamilla-Huidor**

- Majority of our staff are teleworking so that we can do what's being recommended as far as social distancing.
- Workers are checking voicemails and emails frequently, but we do have an Adoptions Duty worker and Adoptions Supervisor duty worker. You can reach us at 858-650-5995 and ask for a duty worker.
- We have filled 2 of our adoptions supervisor positions. Chaz Filkins has started already and Florence Keitel will start tomorrow.
- New managers are Diana and hopefully you'll get to meet Fatimah Abdullah soon. We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy.

### **ROUNDTABLE:**

- Emma Tidmore- As a mentor keeping vey busy assisting foster parents in south, providing a lot of community services. We're here to help. There has been a wealth of information in this meeting, thank you for all the numbers.
- Valesha- If anything out of the ordinary happens during a visit, feel free to reach out. But what I would need to know are specifics, region/area. I need to be able to get back to the region so they can put out consistent messaging to their staff.

### **IV. NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday, June 11, 2020**

**12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**8911 Balboa Avenue San Diego CA 92123**

*WebEx- Info to join is in meeting reminder*

### **V. ADJOURNMENT: 1:10 p.m.**