

# FOSTER CARE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, July 9, 2020

Microsoft Teams Conference Call

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

**Present:** Steven Wells, Kimberly Washington, Fatimah Abdullah, Diana Macis, Karla Morales, Dannette Shevlin, Barbara Wojtach, Jeff Wiemann, Elizabeth Rosas, Alex Kahn, Cecilia Rubio, Emma Martinez-Tidmore, Veronica Sarabia, Collette Best, Gloria Escamilla-Huidor, Natasha Garcia, Kevin Hauck, Isela Hernandez, Martha Mackenzie, Valerie Moore, Lodia Ruiz, Suzanne Thompson, Belinda Radovich, Zayra Rios, Peggy Ruefer, Kimberly Ayala, Mai Woo, Rosa Ventura, Valesha Bullock, Josie Lewis, Patty Boles, MaryJo Meer, Debbie Stolz

**I. Chair: Diana Macis called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.**

**II. Approval of Agenda/Minutes: Minutes for June 11<sup>th</sup> were approved unanimously with a correction:** Jennifer Zapata's name is spelled incorrectly.

**III. Updates and Discussion:**

### **North County Foster Parent Association- Patty Boles**

- Putting our re-opening on hold due to the new surge in cases. We can still make kid packs- just reach out for them or for any other needs.
- Made a new connection with a non-profit company that gave nursing clothing. Maybe we could help our birth parents. Brand new clothes in boxes.
- Still advocating through all media fronts, dealing with all the angst and fears, and trying to maintain placements.
- Diana asked if the nursing clothing could be brought up at the Placement Unit meeting on Tuesday? Patty said yes, this is a good idea. Everything is still in boxes and are safe to pick up. Might have time to organize and send list of what's inside the boxes.

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

- We had a lot of donations from Promises 2 Kids and we're trying to figure out how to give them out. Hoping we can bag items up by size and deliver to cars as people pull up.
- Fostering Hearts just did a piece so we're thinking of putting out something for funding for our offices. We're going to try and add a link to our page so people can make donations.
- Visits are a big issue with bio-parents and foster homes. Visitation Rules need to be spelled out clearly.

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

- We are working on finishing the resource parent handbook. Working closely with Barbara's team to get it finished.

### **Child Welfare Services Policy & Program Support- Karla Morales**

- New going out to caregivers with hearing notices in regard to the JV290. Starting in July we sent a new letter to caregivers encouraging them to fill out the form, send it back to CWS, then our legal unit will receive it, make the copies and file it for them. So this is an added support for those who are unable to file in person themselves.
- Mary Jo asked what if a caregiver is not receiving hearing notices? Karla answered that you should get in touch with your social worker. This is also an online court form so you can find it that way as well. Diana adds that we get feedback that caregivers are not knowing about the court sessions. Valesha added that some of them are also being told that there isn't room for them to attend the hearing because there are only so many lines they can join in on.
- Patty asked if other reports are available online? Karla said all reports are available online to the judge, casa

and attorneys. Patty said they would love if foster parents had the ability to send forms in electronically.

#### **Foster Care Eligibility- Mai Woo**

- There is a draft of an ACL regarding an increase in the foster care and KinGap rates, 3.72% increase. AAP there is a final ACL. This was effective July 1st. AAP/KinGap will see supplement, Foster care will see reimbursement at the end of July. Basic care rate went up to \$1,037. Dual agency rates increased too.

#### **Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) - Kimberly Ayala**

- We still fully staffed in regions. Most nurses are at driving testing sites 100%
- Diana asked the best way to get in touch with the PHNs? Contact Kimberly or Claire:
  - Kimberly: 619-542-4194 cell: 619-577-2616
  - Claire: 619-692-8488

#### **Polinsky Children's Center (PCC)- Elizabeth Rosas**

- We continue to hire more staff. Our pop is 57, including 20 infants and toddlers.
- Actively recruiting NEST families, currently have 51. Recruiting families that are able to take teens. July 22 is the next support group, topic is Bonding and Attachment in Maltreated Children.

#### **Foster Home Licensing/Resource Family Approval (RFA)- Rosa Ventura**

- Workers are still going out and doing in person visits. Not much has changed recently
- Dannette: Kinship families are wondering how long it is taking the RFAs to be completed due to Covid? Our goal for emergency placements is still 90 days and we're keeping that goal for the most part. We did have some issues with TIPS, but that is resolved. On the Standard we're moving along as well, but each case is different. Valesha added that we had to wait for some State procedures to move forward after Covid hit. RFA team has been creative in getting families approved, so we've moved past most barriers.

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

- We are in full swing with conducting orientations, schedule is posted through September. We've had about 200 people come through since we started back up.
- QPI Steering committee July 15<sup>th</sup>. Youth Law Center will attend. We'll be highlighting some goals for the next few years. With the pandemic there has been a pause in our work, so we'll be looking how we can facilitate this movement. 4<sup>th</sup> quarter training maybe in September. We'll offer multiple trainings for all instead of doing it by region.
- We continue with Fostering Hope (Sunday evenings) with Channel 8 who also airs on the CW. San Diego living is a daytime segment as well. This Sunday they will be honoring our resource parent heroes. Debbie just aired recently.

#### **San Diego County Independent Living Skills- Steven Wells**

- We continue to do in person visits as much as safely possible. Other supportive services, like DMV, we're doing what we can. Trying to focus on skill building since the times have changed and housing and finances are a challenge right now.
- At the end of June the governor signed a bill that include the extension of extended foster care for youth 21 and up through June 30 2021. This also inclusive of re-entries. We're waiting for more guidance. They will no longer exit the program especially if their challenges are Covid related.
- Waiting to see if other ILS services will continue as well. Housing services will be extended.
- Point of Contact Kim Hinck and James Salazar
  - Kim 619-767-5246 Kim.Hinck@sdcounty.ca.gov
  - James 619-767-5171 James.Salazar@sdcounty.ca.gov
  - Info Line: 619-767-5275
- I'm also a co-chair of the LGBTQ+ work group. We focus on how we can continue to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ youth in foster care and identifying foster families who will help care for these youth. Let us know if you know any families that can provide support and we meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday monthly 2-3 pm if interested in attending. Kimberly asked if the placement teams could be updated on LGBTQ+ supportive families so we can update the placement info.

- Debbie asked if there is an age cap on the extension. It's only for youth that are currently 21 or those that are turning 21.
- Debbie mentioned that the cell phones are coming soon but we are still concerned with young kids having so much access. Steven answered that since Covid, they have wanted to actually open up the resources available since kids need technology so there wouldn't be a barrier to accessing education. We understand the concerns.
- EFC is now handling the cases that used to be managed by Probation.

#### **San Diego County Respite- Alex Kahn**

- Continuing to process claims. Payment process is slower, but we appreciate your patience. Working hard to certify providers in both phases. Getting appointments for live scans and doing home visits. Covid has slowed things down a little because we're taking safety precautions. Excess hours request are being approved when possible.

#### **Comprehensive Assessment & Stabilization Services (CASS)- Jennifer Zapata**

- Still receiving referrals, currently no waiting list.

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

- Attendance rate is off the charts. TIPS classes this month and we've added Spanish. Doing a variety of Adoptions classes, resource parent support groups and trainings through the YMCS for kinship support groups, specialty classes, and First Aid/CPR. All via Zoom. Participants say they really like the Zoom format.

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

#### **Central- Isela Hernandez**

- We have kids at PCC that we're trying to find placements for. Also had a sibling group that were court ordered to stay together. Kudos to management, PCC, PCO working together with a family that wasn't fully approved but put this family on a faster track to place these siblings.
- Foster parents are still concerned about in person visits, but the court is still requiring in person because the birth parents have the right to visits too.

#### **South- Belinda Radovich**

- We have a total of 5 children at PCC.
- Appreciate Mary Jo and other foster parents that we've reached out to for placement support.
- Just hired a new SW II, Daniel Cardona, who is being trained.
- We are hearing concerns from FPs. We are doing our best having visits in the office and follow social distancing guidelines.

#### **East- Collette Best**

- We are still trying to get visits to happen and appreciate our FPs for helping and appreciate them
- We have 7 children at PCC. We do have some ICPS that have been approved so the kids can get to their destinations.

#### **North Central- Josie Lewis**

- We have 12 kids at PCC, 2 are medically fragile.
- We're hoping this weekend to place a sibling group of 4. Jessica Bruno was promoted to SW II and will be attending SWIT soon. Hopefully by then, we'll have Carmen transferring back.
- Thank you to Mary Jo, I've reached out to her a few times over the past few weeks and she's been very helpful.

### **North- Valerie Moore**

- We have 12 kids at PCC. Hoping to have 3 placed with grandparents as soon as we get beds to the home. 2 kids with behavior issues will be going home on a trial visit soon. 1 kid will be going to SPA.
- Debbie is asking how big is the push for face to face visits? Belinda/South, it hasn't been a barrier, but we hear the concerns. Parents are worried about the kids being exposed during visits, then coming back. Isela/Central, other foster parents are willing to take a child, but aren't willing to let the child go to visits or don't want a child with a lot of services required. Josie agrees that it does make things difficult when looking for homes when caregivers opt out when in person visits are required.

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

- We're very excited that we were awarded the contract with CWS and AIS to continue to provide kinship and respite for kinship families. Encourage you to send formal and informal referrals.

### **YMCA Emergency Child Care Bridge Program –Lodia Ruiz/Cecilia Rubio**

- We saw an up rise in referrals and are back to our norm. Preparing for what will happens with schools as we might get more childcare referrals. Average 7 certifications pending when it used be an average of 1/week.
- Because schools are closed parents are looking to us to provide schooling childcare. Resource parents do have to be working or going to school to be eligible.
- Alternative payment programs continue to work with us to get long term subsidy childcare.

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

- Still working hard, most are teleworking. Always someone in the office though. We have been getting finalizations going again. Now that resource parents can take classes online to satisfy adoptive requirements, we can move more cases along.

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

- The county is getting ready to prepare for our yearly budget meeting. Hoping that a lot of recommendations from the state will be implemented. Very lucky to have received funding from the federal and state level.
- Will be taking concerns back about visitation from caregiver and staff sides. We have to be careful when talking about court orders because each one is case specific.
- In regard to recruitment, we signed an MOU with People's Alliance of Justice. We'll be working with them at disproportionality and working with relatives of color to see if there are barriers on their side.
- We have been tasked thought the child and family strengthening board to look at our placement processes.
- We're meeting virtually with the State and meeting at the local levels expressing our concerns. With RFA Written Directives 7 will be sent out for review soon.
- Submitting court documents electronically will be kept on my radar.
- Hopefully the e-blasts have been helpful in getting information out to everyone.
- Our county has been trying to make sure we have more options for families and staff, but we weren't able to use Zoom as a platform. However, I've been working on this to get Zoom approved. We have to stick with Microsoft Teams as our IT department has approved this as a safer platform.
- Our offices are open for appointment only visitations.

### **ROUNDTABLE:**

- Mary Jo- Please give kudos to the Adoptions workers. They are getting creative with ways to make contact.

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

**Thursday, August 13, 2020**

**12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**8911 Balboa Avenue San Diego CA 92123**

*Microsoft Teams- Info to join is in meeting invite*

### **V. ADJOURNMENT: 1:41 p.m.**

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