

# FOSTER CARE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, August 13, 2020

Microsoft Teams Conference Call

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

**Present:** Diana Macis, Patty Boles, MaryAnn Paschal, Emma Tidmore, Gloria Escamilla-Huidor, Mary Jo Meer, Natasha Garcia, Dannette Shevlin, Brenda Jones, Barbara Wojtach, Jennifer Zapata, Kania Webster, Zayra Rios, Lodia Ruiz, Jennifer Zapata, Cecilia Rubio, Peggy Ruefer, Fatimah Abdullah, Carmen Robles, Veronica Sarabia, Natasha Hood, Valesha Bullock, Valerie Moore, Kimberly Washington, Mai Woo, Kimberly Ayala, Alex Kahn, Belinda Radovich, Kevin Hauck, Elizabeth Rosas, Veronica Miller, Michele Manley, Lisa Castagnola, Josie Lewis, Martha Mackenzie, Shane Harris

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

**II. Approval of Agenda/Minutes:** Minutes for July 9<sup>th</sup> were approved unanimously

**III. Updates and Discussion:**

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

- Still closed. We wrote a grant to the county and hope it is funded as both associations are at jeopardy of losing our establishments.
- We are getting a lot of prom dresses and items for girls and boys. Trying to figure out how to do picks ups for these items. We're still doing kid packs and TIPS books.
- Elizabeth M- Extended Foster Care would love some prom attire. We carry most of the cases for ages 17-21. Thank you so much and so excited for our youth.
- If you want on the email list for Straight From The Heart please send me an email at patricialboles@gmail.com and I can add you. Here is my cell phone 760 643 8373.
- Major kudos to Judge España who has been advocating for access to court for resource parents. She understands some are not getting notices so now she is doing the cases for Meadow Lark. You can email Patty Boles and Patty will reach out to Judge España.

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

- I am now the president of our association. We are also looking at downsizing and we're looking at grants.
- We're doing a giveaway where we'll probably just have families drive up and we're put items in trunks.

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

- We are pushing on finalizing the resource parent handbook.
- Reminder: We have the Bridge program as a resource for parents working and/or going to school.

### **Foster Care Eligibility- Zayra Rios/Mai Woo**

- Clothing allowance is starting to go out. Started August 1<sup>st</sup> and should complete by the end of September.

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

- Most of our nurses are still working with COVID response. If you have questions about health passports you're more than welcome to contact me.
- Reminder- if foster parents need to send in documents, reach out to me as well.

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

- Population is currently at 67 kids with 17 of them under 6 years old. Please spread the word.
- We have the foster parent virtual support group provided by ESCU. This month it is on August 26 from 6pm-8pm on the ABC's of visitation.
- We are continuing to do face to face and virtual visits here.

- In EFC youth ages 21 and over between the dates of 4/17/20 through 6/30/21 can stay in EFC. There are no anticipated changes in the ACL but it should be out in 1-2 weeks. Happy they are getting continued support during COVID.

#### **DSEP- Veronica Miller**

- We continue to provide all of our services through Zoom and FaceTime. Cases are staying open a little longer due to challenges that providers are facing. Continue to refer if you have a child that's not receiving services and you have behavior or development concerns.

#### **Foster Home Licensing/Resource Family Approval (RFA) – Natasha Hood**

- Version 7 of the Written Directives is being released next month so be on the lookout.
- For a short time we were able to do interviews virtually. The State has now directed us to complete them in person. We understand the concerns about staff coming out so we try to get information over the phone first or even do a virtual tour of the home so that we spend less time in the home when we get there. Before going out we screen the family and we do use PPE
- We have more offices open to provide Live Scan services now.
- RFA duty # is 858-650-5876

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

- The QPI Steering Committee meets this month. The state liaison will join the call to help plan next year's QPI topics.
- We continue to do orientations virtually and it's working well.

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

- We are aware of the issue with payments going out to respite providers. We thought we had everything worked out, but Fiscal has had questions. We're working with them and claims are now moving forward.
- Moving forward we'll also be posting updates on our respite website. We want the most current info to be here for you to look at. We updated the claim form so it will be on the website and we won't be able to use the old version.
- Claims can be sent via scanned copy to our Respite email box or you can mail them to 8965 Balboa Ave. We cannot accept photos or screenshots. Make sure forms are complete.
- As a county we cannot pay for respite care for non-eligible parents. Meaning the person using the respite program must be a resource parent with a county of San Diego dependent, not a biological child in guardianship or adopted.
- Reminder for hours: We give 100 hours per quarter. Quarters are Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, July-Sept, Oct-Dec. Please keep track of the hours you use. If you're taking a child as a respite provider make sure they're under the 100 hours or that excess has been approved.
- Alex has final approval for excess respite. The request has to come in from the PSW. Alex sometimes reaches out to managers and/or chiefs to discuss and comes to a decision.
- Mary Ann Paschal asked how do resource parents find out if a child has hours. You can reach out to the county respite team. Mary Ann also asked will COVID impacts be considered when asking for excess hours. Alex says that they look at a lot of different components, so the more information given the better.
- Brenda asked what the protocol is for switching from Maxim to the county. The first phase was for resource family/licensed foster homes. If a parent doesn't fall into this category, yes, homes may still have to be certified and they will need to go through the process. Peggy is working on certifying homes.
- Patty Boles wants to remind everyone that COVID is hitting the families hard. Sometimes the parent needs someone to watch the other kids in the home while the parent is doing one on one with the foster kid.
- Mary Jo- South Bay has started school already, with many meetings, no special education needs, and no aides. They even sent a letter with the IEPs and said they're treating them the same as other kids.
- Emma Tidmore- Regarding the pool of respite hours, how are we doing with the hours that are being allotted? Are there enough respite hours for others that need additional hours? Alex- No one is being denied respite unless it's not appropriate respite. There isn't a shortfall of funds but we still have to look closely at excess requests and keep that in mind future needs when approving them. Since May we've received maybe 10 excess respite requests. So people are staying within their 100 hours so far. We're looking at things on a

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case by case basis.

- Mary Ann- One common thread I'm seeing is when people need to communicate with Peggy Ruefer consistently they say she's so nice, she returns calls, she's respectful, so shout out to Peggy. Alex agrees that Peggy and Natasha have been doing a great job. It's a learning process for everyone involved.
- Natasha Garcia- If parents need to reach our team to ask about how many hours have been used, keep in mind that we rely on what's been reported to us. We try to keep track on a daily basis, but claims could possibly come in later. So please remain patient and keep open communication.

#### **Comprehensive Assessment & Stabilization Services (CASS) - Lisa Castagnola**

- Still taking referrals. We're about 60% in person, 40% telehealth. Depends on the needs and comfort level of homes and staff.
- Brenda asked what the protocol is for CASS when they visit homes. A few families are saying the CASS worker wants to see the child's bedroom every visit. Lisa answered that no, that's not a protocol of ours so I will follow up with staff. It could be an issue of wanting a private space, would need to know the specifics.
- Jennifer reiterates that we are a therapeutic service and do ask personal questions. Sometimes need to ask questions away from the parents and/or other kids. So it's not necessarily protocol to check the room every time, but we might be trying to find privacy for the child.

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

- We continue to provide a variety of classes; preapproval, first aid/CPR, support groups, specialty classes. Each month we're adding more classes. As of September we'll be back to our volume that we were offering in person before the pandemic.
- Once issues that we had starting mid-July was getting certificates out to people. We're having to email them and doing about 400 each week. We're looking at a solution but we are up to date now.

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

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

- We have 9 children at PCC including 2 med frag kids. We have a few sibling groups that need homes.
- Jessica is still in SWIT and we're hoping Carmen comes back at the end of the month, so it's just me. Bear with me if I'm not as responsive as you need.

##### **North- Martha Mackenzie**

- We have 15 at PCC, including teenagers, kids with autism and Down-syndrome.
- It would be nice if our courts would allow out of county placements because we get responses from parents out of county.
- Resource parents are concerned about the safety of visitations.

##### **Central- Carmen Arronte**

- We have 14 kids at PCC with 2 more coming today, with a variety of issues; Diabetes, Autism, and sibling groups. We agree that visits are complicated right now. A lot of our population is homeless so it adds an additional barrier in someone wanting to take placement due to the fear of exposure.

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

- We just did last year's data summary. 303 RFA referrals for the year representing 401 kids. Did 53 trauma informed trainings for 703 childcare providers. On the Voucher side, distributed 1,078 which represents \$849,000. Without this program that would be coming out of the parent's pockets. 73% are transferring to long-term subsidy care. They stay with the program about 2.7 months.
- Cecilia- we have been seeing a huge increase in referrals. Last month we certified about 15 vouchers. So far this month we've done 33. Update regarding school age children. Now that they are doing distance learning we will be reimbursing child care providers for that time rather than cutting them during distance learning.
- Are there enough daycares for kids? Yes, we deal with a huge database, families, centers, preschools.
- Can we refer FFA homes for Bridges? Yes, but it has to come from the county PSW.

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### **San Diego Office of Education- Michelle Manley**

- Schools are passing out devices, books and materials that are needed. We're doing referrals for tutoring by video so get your referrals in as soon as possible. Special Ed, they are providing services, it is direct through video, but they are supposed to have additional time with the instructors. There are some schools providing daycare on campus. Some districts are providing services with private agencies. Tutoring referrals for all regions do go to our program.
- Survey requests are going out this week about daycare needs. As soon as I hear confirmed districts that are providing the daycare I'll let everyone know.  
Tutoring referral provided as a word document to send to all.

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

- We're continuing to be safe and being sensitive to our caregiver's needs. We are still reachable even though we're teleworking. Please reach out if you have concerns.

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

- We are up for renewal with our departments. Anticipate that everyone will have to go through the training again. I'll be reaching out to those that are current voting members. If you have changes to your voting members please let me know that.
- CWDA ops meetings are now being held virtually, being attending by our director. Lots of info has gone up regarding education, visitation, services and other hot topics.
- Biggest piece for CWS is that we're working virtually and its been a challenge but we're doing our best to stay connected with our families. Be sure you give us a call if there are systematic things that need to be addressed.
- Brenda asked do you have to be finger printed again to do County Respite even though you got finger printed with Maxim. Valesha answered that it's determined on a case by case basis. Live Scans are being done by appointment only. Peggy can set up for Respite, RFA will set up for resource families. There are no walk in services at county offices at this juncture.

### **ROUNDTABLE:**

- Shane Harris-
  - The death of Ronda Felder has hurt many of us. Prior to her death, we had been working on gathering data and making it more public. Kim Giardina is helping with this as well. Want the social workers to know you have an advocate on your side with the People's Alliance of Justice.
  - Are wondering how CWS is supporting workers during this time? We heard complaints about PPE. Valesha answered that we have various supplies now available in our building. Wipes, goggles, variety of facial masks, complete protection for live scan workers, shoe covers, etc. We ask staff to make sure they have them and if they feel they need something, let us know.
  - Percentage of reunifications during pandemic was worrisome. Do you know the percentage? We don't have a percentage.
  - Is the county providing extra assistance for PPE as the price of PPE has increased? We find out the needs of a child, and the support will follow the child.
  - shaneharrisnow@gmail.com Open to dialogue can bring issues up at Child and Family board meeting.
- Mary Jo- Across the board there are workers threatening to move children because visits aren't happening because there is a court order. They think the court order supersedes the health order. Valesha heard some of the concerns this morning. We have a process where everyone who has been exposed to the child has to follow. If the bio-family is not following the process that needs to be brought to the social worker's attention.
- Kania Webster- Is there a policy on notifying the resource families if a worker does test positive and how far back would you go? We do have an internal policy for being notified about any exposure. Whatever public health provides us direction to do, that's what we have to do.
- Shane Harris- Who is doing the tracing for our Foster youth? Valesha- we don't know if there is a specific team assigned to a specific community. We roll things up as directed. A task force would be great and I'll bring it up.

**IV. NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday, September 10, 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: 2:00 p.m.**