

FOSTER CARE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 11th, 2018

8911 Balboa Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123, Magnolia Room

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Present: Amanda Amabile, Frank Andrade, Heidi Blue, Patty Boles, Valesha Bullock, Lisa Castagnola, Miriam Curiel, Wendy Curiel, Breanna Davila, Jorge De La Toba, Nancy Elizarraraz-Lopez, Isela Hernandez, Nicole Kelsay, Claire Lynch-Dwight, Diana Macis, Maria Martinez, Jessica Morales, Sarah Nolan, Lodia Ruiz, Veronica Sarabia, Debbie Stolz, Martha Tavares, Barbara Wojtach, Jennifer Zapata, Sheila Kamen, Robin Thompson, Collette Best, Mary (Martha) Mackenzie

- I. Debbie Stolz called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.** All in attendance made introductions.
- II. Approval of Agenda/Minutes:** The November 2017 minutes was unanimously approved
- III. Discussion:**

HHS, Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) – Diana Macis

- The QPI Convening will take place in New Orleans on 1/16-17. We will have foster parents and regional ambassador's representation in attendance.
- We participated in Beyond the Bench conference, held for judicial officers and court related professionals. We helped support the pre-conference session which included foster parents, birth parents, ex-foster youth, social worker, and a Texan judge as panelist. Jennifer Rodriguez, executive director of the youth law center, facilitated the discussion. We received positive feedback on the panelist. This was about QPI and why it is important to practice in child welfare, and support QPI from the judicial part.
- Next quarterly training is scheduled for the first week in March. There will be a flyer submitted with all the regional dates listed. This is in partnership with California Youth Connections. The topic will be to "Understanding Me Entirely" training will cover from an ex-foster youth perspective." This will be open to the courts, social workers, and caregivers.
- We are hosting the Southern Area Trainer and Recruitment Network (SATARN) meeting at the end of this month. We will be bringing in QPI this. Robin Allen and Cathi Huerta will be presenting on how RFA and what the future looks like in terms of recruitment/retention. We will also have Melissa from YMCA Kinship give presentation about RFA, best practices, and Kinship navigators.

Placement Support – Miriam Curiel

- Special Care Rates will not be going away, but it will look different. Many people were concerned due to the Level of Care coming in February. We are currently working on what that will look like with more to come.
- For the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) we now have our own RFA permanency worker. For those families that have children out of state seeking placement, we are able to expedite requests.

Health & Human Services Agency (HHS), Child Welfare Services (CWS), Deputy Director – Valesha Bullock

- Kudos to my team and everyone involved in Continuum of Care (CCR) and Resource Family Approval (RFA). We have met our first year and this has been a huge change. We are currently working on the conversion component of RFA.

- In regard to the state a lot of discussion regarding conversion and how every county will be implementing that piece. We would like to get direction from the states that are doing conversion for counties smaller than we are. We want to provide a consistent message in working with them.

Nikki Kelsay – Conversion is for licensed foster families or had an adoptive home study, they need to convert to RFA. This is a different process and trying to move them from old to new. The families who are converting are families who had an open/active home study, automatically convert. Those who are licensed and took a placement in 2017 can convert. Relatives that had an approval with a placement can convert, or people that took in Respite, can convert. And Respite for us means, Maxim, Options, or Home for the Holidays. Those are the criteria that people have to meet in order to convert to RFA. If the criteria are not met, they will be put on HOLD, and we will not be able to place with them anymore. That old way of doing business is obsolete and we need to convert to them to RFA in order to take a placement.

- There are three different things coming that may impact foster families in the next couple months.
 - Special Care Rate – this is generated from the Level of Care coming from the state. This will be the looking at what funding source is going to be offered for children coming into care.
 - Nurturing Evaluation Stabilizing Team (NEST) will also be impacting some of our foster families. We want to make sure who ever will be volunteering to be a volunteering family, has met the criteria needed for eligibility.
 - And with Level of Care (LOC) coming in, we do not impact the families who are receiving Special Care Rates in any way. We have workgroups in place to help us manage these pieces. We will be advocating for our families and make sure the state in understanding where we are coming from. The Level of Care will be looking at the needs of the child, behaviorally, physically, and medically. This is anything impacting the child and families will need to meet the certain level of care. This is also includes, what the caregiver is doing to meet those needs.
- We will be looking at possibly scheduling more forums for Q & A's. The changes will not only impact our licensed foster homes, but also our Relative homes. We want to streamline the information before sending out to eliminate confusion.

San Diego Foster Parent Association – Debbie Stolz

- Many toys were given to the kids during the holidays
- A lot of discussion on changes and miscommunication with training hours
- Thank you to Mattress Firm who donated funds for families who had losses due to the fires.

North County Foster Parent Association – Patty Boles

- Many toys were distributed to kids and we continue to have toys for stocking stuffers. We give them away at support groups.
- The Board of Supervisors contacted us and a speaker presented to the community while setting up toy drive. We had 109 kids show up. This was in partnership with the Rincon Indian Tribe. Many toys were given to kids and included high priced toys that are not always available to youth.
- Tablet donations were provided for our older kids from our Tech-for-Tots Drive
- We just received notification on donation pick up with Mattress Firm
- We continue to assist many Relatives in need.
- Kimonos for Kai donated \$1800.00. We were able to purchase toys for the 0-2 year olds from Target.

HHSA, Child Welfare Services Placement Specialists – All Regions

East Region – Collette Best

- We did slow down in December
- Getting ready for the Level of Care

Central Region – Isela Hernandez

- QPI monthly meeting held yesterday as attended by CASS
- Able to place kids before the holidays
- New staff in placement unit
- Getting ready for the Level of Care
- Question to Maria Martinez, Foster Care Eligibility: How are relatives able to obtain birth certificate of child or child birth parents so they can apply for cash aid funding?

Maria Martinez – The relative would need to request a birth certificate duplicate from their eligibility worker (aka Health Human Specialist (HHS.) If family not born in this country, they may be able to use other documentation like a baptismal or sign a sworn statement. Another resource is to appeal decision by using the Notice of Action (NOA), located on the back section of NOA.

North Coastal Region – Martha Mackenzie

- Just attend the LOC training and we will be working through it
- We a losing a worker in March
- QPI trainings are going well. We introduced the QPI binder to foster parents and it was well received.

San Diego County Juvenile Probation – Frank Andrade

- We are following the same thing as CWS with RFA approvals. We conduct our own Child Family Teaming (CFT) meetings and working on LOC for our families. We will be in attendance in next LOC training.
- We received 63- RFA referrals; 32- applications were completed in order to move on process; 9- homes approved and ready for placement; mostly relative family homes
- Hosted 30 CFT's, this is a new process in Probation. The CFT's allow a voice for family and having the best options for child. We have received good feedback from officers who have participated in meetings.

YMCA Kinship Support Program – Lodia Ruiz

- We have a location change announcement for our South Spanish Speaking support group. The Friday morning, South Spanish meetings, was moved to Wednesday morning at Casa Familiar. Same time frame.
- Just completed holiday toy drives.
- Slow referral month; 38- referrals in December: 39% from CWS and 61% non-CWS
- 18 clients requests for Emergency Funds: \$8,000 formal and \$1,000 informal
- Car club Street Masters went really well.
- Received Petco donations and gave to kids in North County.
- We completed our first In-House Adoptive family this year because it was not picked up by SAY San Diego.

Nikki Kelsay – the associations are receiving calls from relative caregivers, should they refer to YMCA for additional resources?

- Yes, they can call or self submit a referral. Currently there is a waitlist of 2-3 weeks. Due to staffing we are in process of employing two (2) Kinship Navigators.

HHSA, San Diego County Adoptions – Jorge De LaToba

- Completed holiday toy drives
- Currently half way in Fiscal year and working on finalizations.
- We have identified 2 new staff, training in LOC to work with our 900 Adoption homes
- Finalized our first RFA home in November

HHSA, CWS Policy & Program Support Division – Veronica Sarabia

- Changes in LOC, RFA, and policy are heavily involved in supporting the different programs in the placement units. We continue to be busy in writing out policies with new changes we are here to support regions, eligibility, and caregivers.

HHSA, Foster Care Eligibility – Maria Martinez

- High volume of ongoing RFA cases in process for approval and funding. We do approve Non-Related extended family members (NREFM) homes up to six months, but at the Cal-WORK rate. We refer relative homes to Cal-WORKS for funding in the meantime.
- Social workers continue to email issues with the Family Resource Centers (FRC) follow ups, and we review requests for any elevation. Currently two (2) staff is assigned cases pending RFA approval. We will be adding a third worker to be lead in working with the FRC's and communicating to the relative families.

HHSA, Public Health Nurse (PHN) – Claire Lynch-Dwight

- Reminder to get your flu shot.
- Flyer of County sponsored event on 2/24, for Free Dental Sealants and Fluoride Varnish. This is for children countywide with no dental resources, no proof needed. This is a walk-in appointment.
- We have new staff and a change of procedure in calculation of Medical and Dental compliance. We have two new nurses coming in February/March.

Valesha Bullock – The old CHDP process on recommendation for children to get their medical and dental changed to Bright Futures. One of the changes is the age range decreased in having services earlier in years, for both medical and dental.

- The change in dental requirement went from age 3 for first visit to age 1, then every six months after. And for medical, there is an extra exam at age 2 ½, it used to go to from age 2 to age 3, then annual through the age of 18. The baby visits are the same starting at 5 days.

HHSA, Polinsky Children Center (PCC) – Heidi Blue

- Population is 14, with one child under 6 years old
- We are fully operating as a 10-day and continue to be successful, over 90% of our kids are moving out within 10-days. We continue to have the long-stays and workers who seek out resources for the children who tend to stay over the 10 days. We are meeting regularly with Regional Center trying to work issues and in partnership Community Care Licensing (CCL) is talking to development services of the state to make this 10-day model successful.
- We are waiting from the state for final direction on how to apply to become a 10-day shelter. We have all regulations from the state in place at Polinsky.
- Nurturing Evaluation Stabilization Team (NEST) is moving along. The policy has been finalized and we are still informally accepting foster parent calls if interested to participate in the new ESCU program. Eventually a formal letter will go out to the foster parent community inviting you to become a NEST family.
- NEST will start as a pilot and hoping to get 25 families who will work closely with the Polinsky Children's Center and the ESCU unit, to be available to take children quickly. The goal is to support the 10-day model by diverting children from coming into shelter care or moving them into a family setting in 10 days.
- We have new staff, Ana Virges from South, added to ESCU unit. We are fully staff in ESCU, we do provide services 7- days a week and until 8 p.m.

Developmental Screening and Enhancement Program (DSEP) — Sarah Nolan

- No updates at this time.

Debbie Stolz – How is the availability for OT/PT and speech services?

- There is a waitlist for all those services. For DSEP children they get bumped up to the top of list for all the therapies. There are currently 3,000 children on the list.

Grossmont College Foster & Adoptive Kinship Care Education Program (FAKCE) — Barbara Wojtach

- New pink book in different format is out and it is user friendly.
- Our offices are currently displaced and we are working from home.
- In January-February for support groups, a new one is added called Safe and Happy Babies. This includes a condensed version from the 8-hour training in both English and Spanish. In addition, a training on, “Now What? Things you need to know for every placement.”
- Program coordinator, Daniela Murphy, connected with community partners. New training called, “Question persuade and refer gatekeeper training for suicide prevention, presented by San Diego County Suicide Prevention Council. Statistics for kids who are in foster care show that adolescents were nearly 4 times more likely to have attempted suicide and adverse childhood experiences play a major role in suicide attempts. One study found that 2/3 of suicide attempts may be attributed to abusive or traumatic childhood experiences. This is a 3-hour training happening on 1/25 at the San Diego Foster Parent Association.
- A group from Wells Fargo came to present on financial issues for foster parents. We had 13-14 attendees.
- Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) from Grossmont College presented about resources available for young people who are interested in going to college.
- In partnership with the Jewish Family Services, they provide the Positive Parenting Program, known as the Triple P. This is 3-session training on 2/7, 2/14, and 2/21. We are gearing this training to the Kinship families. There will be food served and childcare provided.
- Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) program coming from the Texas Christian University. They do a lot of work with adoptive families. Denise Phipps will present this. This training is held at the support group location in Lakeside.
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) trainings coming up in the next couple months. We will have a Spanish trainer coming from Los Angeles. For our CSEC mandate, is to focus on caregivers, group homes, and FFA’s.

HHSA, Resource Family Approval/ Foster Home Licensing (RFA/FHL) – Wendy Curiel

- First year into RFA
- The versions 5.0 of the written directives with changes, coming out in March
- Received close to 1,000 applications in the Standard process; Over 500 in Emergency requests with over 400 placements, 80 placed by Stand-by, and over 130 homes were approved.

HHSA, Foster and Adoptive Resource Family Services (FARFS) – Nikki Kelsay

- Computer Giveaway was held on 12/12-13 with 300 computers to giveaway to foster families. It was a huge success. Board of Supervisor Cox was present.
- We coordinated “A Home for the Holidays” event to have foster youth and send them to a home of a foster parent for Thanksgiving and Christmas. There were 18 kids placed into a home for Christmas and 12 for Thanksgiving. We hope to make relationships to build in some permanency through these events.

HHSA, Independent Living Skills (ILS) – Denise Bahen

- Our big push is for FAFSA, the financial aid for college. Senate bills passed were each child welfare agency has to identify someone to help kids who are 16 and up to apply for secondary school and apply for financial packets. The foundation will have a step-by-step

webinar (sent to Jessica) to complete the FAFSA for foster youth. Information will be emailed to committee.

- Sweetwater district schools are doing cash for college and financial aid events, some on a Saturday and after school. Our kids can go there to make sure they get the maximum of money that is available to them.

Maxim Respite Care – Breanna Davila

- Attended the QPI meeting at Central Region and are willing to go to other regions to present on resources.

Debbie Stolz – Can they change policy for respite when using for work purposes? The hours should be user friendly.

- It is in our best interest to assist our families. If there are any changes in the law, we can accommodate our families.

Veronica Sarabia – We can look at the law, this allows us guidance on what we can and cannot do. I will need to review respite for working hours.

Roundtable

Lisa Castagnola (CASS) – We would like to let everyone know that we are up and running, our contract started at the beginning of this year. We are currently servicing 72 families either new referrals or already in treatment services. There is no waitlist. We have four (4) Spanish speaking license clinicians and (1) Vietnamese speaking clinicians. We will present at next meeting on CASS services.

IV. NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, February 8, 2018

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

8911 Balboa Avenue San Diego CA 92123

(Magnolia Room, 1st floor)

V. ADJOURNMENT: 2:00 p.m.