

**1624 (CAFPT) Meeting
Recruitment/Retention
Region 3 S
June 10, 2014
Vancouver DCFS**

Attendees: Peggy Hays, Cindy Hardcastle, Terri Barnett, Ruben Reeves, Mark Niskanen, Jaime Redwine, Michelle Fowler, Gary Fowler, Kim Glover, Lynette Westbay, Michelle Lingle

1624 reps on the phone – Amy Gardner and Molly Herzog

Joining by phone: Kelso – 4 foster parents – 0 staff
Centralia - 2 staff
Tumwater – 4 fp – 9 staff
South Bend – 2 staff
Pt Townsend – 1 staff
Pt. Angeles – 1 staff
Aberdeen – 1 staff

Molly began the meeting with an updated list of topics discussed at the Statewide 1624 meeting in Olympia in April – they include:

- Childcare and transportation issues in relation to mandatory training
- Contracted providers with DDA – utilization for respite
- Original intent of 1624
- Affordable care act – foster children have coverage
- DDA/DCFS interagency agreements/MOU
- Excessive length of wait times for intake referrals
- Post adoption services
- Visitation – how best to inform fp on how visit went
- Timely response to caregivers (email, phone calls, etc.)
- Training hours for attending HUBS
- New placements – supports, receiving care rates?
- Medication availability when kids exit counseling services
- Lack of in-home services/supports for fp's with difficult children
- Prudent parenting bill

Arthur Fernandez from the Alliance reports they are having conversations around the childcare issue. Several offices have been able to collaborate with community agencies/volunteers, however often that is not long term or sustainable. He also stated neither Parenting Plus, nor Now I have my first Placement will continue to be mandatory after July 1st. Fp's can take specific topics/modules for this training, depending on their need.

Local Office Topics:

Before Amy started roll call of the offices, she relayed a list of several topics brought to her attention

at the foster Parent conference at Great Wolf Lodge. They include:

- 1) Social workers, interns, visitation contractors not having appropriate car seat training – resulting in transportation of kids without proper restraints
- 2) Lack of childcare for required trainings (ongoing issue already on agenda, CA working to resolve)
- 3) Staff contact information on the CA website is not updated
- 4) Rate assessments are not happening in a timely manner – rate assessor is hard to reach
- 5) FPs are not getting adequate information about why a DLR/CPS investigation is being initiated
- 6) Lack of respite care
- 7) Length of time/delay in processing new FP applications (new concern, Ruben Reeves says this is part of the motivation for current DLR re-structure.)
- 8) Desire to reinstitute receiving care rates/homes

Continued the meeting with local office reports, several of which were represented on the phone.

Vancouver:

1. “The Parent Mentoring Program (PMP) utilizes foster parents to mentor birth parents whose children have been placed in out-of-home care due to abuse or neglect. This pairing is made with the goal of providing individually targeted services to families designed to remediate their parenting deficits, increase their capacity to meet their children’s needs, and expedite the reunification with their children or completion of another permanent plan.
 - The evaluation of the program conducted by the University of Washington in 2008 determined PMP to be a “promising practice”. When families who were assigned to a mentor were compared to families in a comparison group matched for all relevant demographics it was determined that the **PMP families reunified twice as often and 8 months earlier.**Of the 69 families involved with PMP whose cases have closed since January 2013, **50 have reunified (72%)**

This program has been eliminated by the Region. Foster parents would like to see it reinstated in the best interest of children.

Peggy mentioned Debbie Lynn, Deputy Regional Administrator is happy to meet with foster parents to further discuss this program. Although this may not be a statewide topic to take to 16241, Peggy agreed it will be listed.

2. There continues to be long wait times for intake (also mentioned above)
3. Too much time elapses between turning in an application and actual licensure – sometimes as long as 6-12 months

Kelso:

1. Foster parents report they are not given a time frame when a CPS referral is being

investigated or when children are removed.

2. Foster parents state they are not consistently receiving the safety/supervision plan from the social workers. Sometimes the foster parents are developing the supervision plan themselves. Discussion included accounts of incomplete Child Referral Forms. The group also requests respite providers receive both forms.

Tumwater

1. Car seat issue (see above)
2. Caregivers state it has become a financial hardship for foster parents during the first 30 days of placement – appointments, clothing, misc. needs etc. Children are often placed for a few days/weeks, moved to a relative or alternative placement, and then it starts all over again. Foster parents are burning out – it gets expensive. Fp's would like to see a special daily rate for all first placements (similar to receiving care).

Aberdeen

1. Child care for mandatory training (previously discussed but they wanted to bring it up again)
2. Several foster parents are having difficulty printing their certificate for on-line orientation. Other offices report similar problems. HQ has been notified and the Alliance is also working on it.

We were very lucky to have Ruben Reeves, DLR Area Administrator at our meeting. He clarified the DLR reorganization, which will go into effect on 7/1/14. DLR will realign into two sections – Assessment (licensing/home studies) and Safety Monitoring (renewals, licensing investigations/CPS investigations, Health and Safety monitoring visit)

Darcey Hancock remains the DLR Administrator at Headquarters

The Deputy Administrators are identified as following:

Randy Roberts will be the Deputy Administrator who will supervise the HQ program consultant staff.

Pamela McKeown will be the deputy assigned responsibility for managing the Assessment section and supervising 6 Area Administrators in this section.

Ron Effland will be deputy assigned responsibility for the Safety and Monitoring section and supervising the 2 Area Administrators in this section

Area Administrators have been identified for the following positions:

Safety and Monitoring:

Joe Rissone will be the Area Administrator for Region 1 North, and all of Region 2. **Ruben Reeves** will be the Area Administrator for Region 1 South, and all of Region 3.

The Area Administrators for the Assessment section are: Region 1 North-**Jeff Kincaid** , Region 1 South-**Maria Tovar**, Region 2 North-**Diana Chesterfield**, Region 2 South-**Gia Wesley**, Region 3 North-**Xuan Chung**, Region 3 South-**Jeanine Tacchini**

There will be one supervisor for each of the three regions that will supervise staff completing renewals, health and safety monitoring and licensing investigations of foster homes.

According to Ruben, this realignment will prove to be more efficient and more effective for DLR, including a reduction in the amount of time needed to complete home studies. Ruben and his staff will be looking at all applications currently pending longer than 90 days, and suggests to foster parents that if you are aware of pending applications , contact the licensor or supervisor.

It's a good idea for PCP (prospective foster parents) to contact their references, to remind them to return the paperwork. This is often a hold up for processing applications.

Ruben then addressed the topic brought forward (see above) of foster parents not receiving all information regarding allegations. If a child is removed for health and safety reasons, the foster parents may not be given all the information, if or when it could compromise the investigation in any way, or if law enforcement is involved. Children are only removed if there is a solid reason. Ruben expects investigators to be respectful and professional at all times when working with foster parents. DCFS should be notifying foster parents of any decision to remove children due to safety concerns.

Foster parents should feel free to contact Ruben (360-725-6764) or Rich Taylor (360-725-6661) with any questions. Foster parents can also access the FIRST program, through Olive Crest for support (253-219-6782).

Next Meeting - Kelso, September 9th – 10:00 am – 12: 00 pm.