

Resource Family Advisory Board

Face to Face Meeting

October 13-14, 2017
Anchorage, Alaska

PRESENT: Elizabeth Dillon, Brian Headdings, Danielle Holt (10/13 morning), Debbie Laflamme, Aileen McInnis, Yurii Miller, Sabrina Owsley, Heather Payenna, Russell Pressley, Dora Wilson

PHONE: Alana Medel (10/13 morning)

ABSENT: Jo Ann Borges, Gwen Emel, David Garcia

October 13 Day One

Introductions were made around the room and the agenda was reviewed. The following items were added by request of Members:

- Clarification on what defines a group foster home
- Discussion whether to pursue National Foster Parent Association affiliation
- Update on the need for foster homes (media reporting increased need, yet current foster homes are not experiencing increased calls)
- Update on the status of transportation programs (ie. Precious Cargo)
- Update on current OCS supports for workers to avoid high turnover

Licensing Updates – Yurii Miller

Yurii updated the Board on the continued success of the Emergency Relief Support (ERS) Program in the Western, Northern and Southeast OCS regions. The program will be implemented in the Anchorage and Southcentral regions soon.

OCS Leadership: Initiative Updates & Communication - Christy Lawton & Travis Erickson (in person) & Tracy Spartz-Campbell (by phone)

Director Lawton discussed OCS's *2016-2020 Plan to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children*. It was highlighted that there will be ground-breaking tribal collaborations by way of compacts to be signed at the upcoming Alaska Federation of Natives conference. She shared plans for a new Foster Parent Survey to be administered in 2018 and requested the Board's collaboration on questions.

ACTION ITEM: Director Lawton will forward information about survey questions and potentially set up a future teleconference to discuss.

ACTION ITEM: Per suggestion by Director Lawton, RFAB members may pursue more cross-conversations with FFCA since working on similar projects.

Travis Erickson discussed staffing additions and mentoring positions were described and talked about the history and evolution of the need. OCS is collaborating with UAA to help ensure new staff are skilled and prepared through providing more real time support and increased SKILs training time.

The Team Decision-Making (TDM) Process was discussed. The program is being re-calibrated and moving toward implementation of a standardized program statewide with consistency as a goal.

Tracy Spartz-Campbell addressed the status of those children being sent out of Alaska for treatment. A potential gap in services for younger kids with multiple issues was discussed along with changes that would be ideal to implement.

Specific questions presented by the Board were discussed:

Is the number of children in OOH placements on the decline or increase? Why moving in that direction? An increase was experienced as a result of a change in removal procedures. When procedures shifted, it resulted in a higher removal rate increasing the number of kids in care from 2,000 to 3,000. Recently, entries were 5% higher than the number of exits from the system with a goal being for exits to exceed entries. OCS Leadership feels this is obtainable.

If the number of children in care has increased, why aren't foster parents getting more calls for placements? A much higher number of relative placements are being made.

How is the new 1-800 Centralized Intake working? Has there been any feedback from Resource Families about the new intake process? System is working well and they are moving toward having it staffed 24 hours a day within the next year and no more answering service for after hours. There has been no feedback from foster parents as of yet.

Update on the Program Improvement Plan currently being written as part of the recently completed CFSR. Recently held two days of meetings to brainstorm plans with more meetings to come.

How are OCS staff learning about the newly created Foster Parent Bill of Rights and how can the Board assist with this process? Posters have been placed in OCS rooms statewide and the document has been discussed during OCS staff trainings. Director Lawton suggested it be a topic in the November *Frontline* newsletter.

ACTION ITEM: Yurii will forward Foster Parent Bill of Rights information to *Frontline* editors.

OCS Investigations Training – Kimberly Allen, OCS Licensing Attorney

Ms. Allen gave the Board a very informative, thorough presentation. She covered:

- What a foster care license is and what duties are required of foster care licensees
- Definition of Due Process
- Difference between CPS and Licensing Investigations
- The Administrative Hearing Process
- Mediation
- The Alaska Public Records Act
- The Anatomy of an Appeal

A hearty debrief followed to identify areas of focus for process clarification. Ideas were summarized and incorporated into the summary of Saturday's brainstorming session (PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT A)

ACTION ITEM: Yurii will reach out to see if anyone at OCS would be willing to present about CPS Investigations at the March 2018 Face to Face Meeting

October 14 Day Two

PRESENT: Elizabeth Dillon, Brian Headdings, Debbie Laflamme, Aileen McInnis, Yurii Miller, Sabrina Owsley, Heather Payenna, Russell Pressley, Dora Wilson

ABSENT: Jo Ann Borges, Gwen Emel, David Garcia, Danielle Holt, Alana Medel

General Updates

- September's meeting minutes were approved.
- March 2018 Face to Face Meeting in Juneau : check calendars the week of March 26-30
- National Foster Parent Association: Aileen discussed potentially pursuing membership. If there's interested, the national conference will be held in Orlando at the end of June 2018. The Board could potentially invite someone from the NFPA to join a teleconference.
- CPS Board Position: Sarah Abramczyk's application was approved by unanimous vote.

ACTION ITEM: Aileen will reach out to the NFPA and see if we can have a representative attend one of our meetings telephonically to talk about the benefit of NFPA members.

ACTION ITEM: Yurii will contact Sara Abramczyk and let her know about her acceptance to the board.

ACTION ITEM: Yurii will check with the Juneau Central OCS office for availability of the board room during March 26-30.

Licensing Update continued – Yurii Miller

Yurii continued his update from Friday. Handouts were dispersed showing the number of licensing investigations divided by regions. Conversations centered around the high number of investigations in Fairbanks.

Foster Parent Call In/ Email

The Board provided for a call in component to the meeting to allow resource families to call in and speak to the board. The topic of this particular call in was to hear about positive things that are happening around the state. The Board received one contact via telephone from a foster parent who wanted to clarify issues around transportation and express safety concerns with birth parent contact. At the time of the meeting, there were no emails sent in in response.

Citizens Review Panel – Diwakar Vadapalli

Mr. Vadapalli presented a great overview of the CRP hitting the following highlights:

- FY17 Overview & Update

- Highlighted federal and state mandates
- Primary functions of the CRP
- Clarified what the CRP does not do
- Recapped accomplishments during 2016-2017 and goals of 2015-2016
- Explained the CRP's recommendations given to OCS
- Listed and explained the CRP's five goals for 2017-2018
- Listed ways foster parents can get involved with the CRP

Initiatives Discussion-- All

During the last day, we discussed our five initiatives and brainstormed ideas for implementation, development and advocacy. The discussion and ideas for all of the Initiatives are detailed in Attachment A for all of RFAB's initiatives. Below are several action items that came out of our discussion of our five initiatives. (PLEASE SEE **ATTACHMENT A** FOR DETAILS)

ACTION ITEM: Sabrina will update the starter kit flyer to include updated language about ACRF locations and the ability to donate cash intended to buy starter kits.

ACTION ITEM: Yurii will try to locate speakers for the March board meeting to talk about the CPS side of investigations.

ACTION ITEM: All board members are responsible for encouraging community organizations to develop and donate to the starter kit project. This is our time of year we increase our promotion of this initiative

ACTION ITEM: Follow up on Christy Lawton's suggestion that the Board review the potential questions for the bi-yearly Foster Parent Survey. Yurii will find past question and get them to the Board.

ACTION ITEM: The Board will review the proposed Foster Care Regulations and give input when they come out in the upcoming year.

Attachment A: Results From Brainstorm Session Of How To Work On Our Initiatives In The Upcoming Year

INITIATIVE: Promote Regional Support Networks Amongst Foster Parents

Set up Facebook page to encourage communication

- Provide reports of RFAB progress
- NFA Reports and news
- Communication with foster parents
- Bios and pictures of Board members
- Recruitment of new foster parents
- Spotlight families and OCS workers doing a great job
- Highlight CRP Activities
- Should be separate from ACRF
- Need designated administrator of page (possible Associate Board Member?)

Re-Do and Send Postcard out to Families

- Highlight our Facebook Page on Post Card

INITIATIVE: Establish A Bill of Rights (BOR) for Resource Parents in Alaska

NEXT STEPS:

- Grievance—Automatically send out BOR with grievance process paperwork
- Identify Responses/Action when BOR are violated/ Add to brochure?
- Require Seasoned Foster Parents to have a refresher Training at 5 years

PROMOTING AWARENESS IDEAS:

FOR FOSTER PARENTS

- Postcard out to foster parents promoting the BOR
- Put BOR in the Handbook when it is re-done or reprinted
- Tie to Chain of Command in Core Handouts
- Rural Areas Need More awareness of BOR
- Put in Training Tracks, Make this a Training ByteTraining
- Email a link to the BOR to all foster parents

WITH OTHERS:

- How do staff know about BOR-- SKILS, Posters and Buy in part of culture
- BOR Presentation by Board Member to OCS Staff Mtgs.
- Making Available at Conferences (such as AFN, BIA, NICWA)
- Get information out to Tribal Partners, Tribal State Collaboration, BIA Providers Conference
- Regional Tribal Organizations (Kawerak, Manillaq, etc)
- Post on State Website
- Put In the Handbook—include steps to do if not followed
- Ask OCS to print out quality brochures in 2018 plus surplus to distribute

INITIATIVE: Seek Resource Parent Feedback and Share with OCS Management

Encourage use of board for reviewing and recommendation of OCS Policies

- Review FP Surveys for OCS Questions (Yurii will send past ??)
- Provide Feedback on Proposed New FC Regulation.

Increasing Ways that Resource Families can Communicate with RFAB

- Be aware of Data limitations for rural areas
- Can we use Facebook social media events/Live events for upcoming Juneau meeting? Encourage participation through comments
- Find out from TCC/Tingit Haida how they are getting feedback from their foster parents
- Target rural with Outreach partner with school district IRA, UA System Teleconference, School District staff
- Consider RFAB Meeting Face to Face in Bethel, Northern Region, Rural, Fairbanks, Explore NFPA Funding for meetings, Maybe meet more often?
- Facebook Page for RFAB Came up again
 - Pictures, and bios of board members on the site, locations

Can we have more formal communication with OCS management?

- Formal written update
- More regular meeting
- Including accomplishments
- Quarterly contact?

INITIATIVE: Make Recommendations Regarding Licensed Foster Home Investigations

FAQ Project

- Continue to develop the FAQs and encourage distribution at time of investigation or orientation, or Licensing Homes visit
- Move forward to work with licensing to develop accurate answers to questions
- Explain different tracks of CPS vs. Licensing vs Both
- Develop flow chart of the different process- possibly color coding CPS vs Licensing
- Emphasize 15 day deadline or decision Final
- Get attorney input on CPS investigations
- Increased Outreach and Education to Rural Areas

OTHER IDEAS:

- Identify mentors or advocates to help explain with process
- Wording—investigations vs. assessment
- Share ACRF Training with Board for self-education.
- Write and use cover letter with Report of Investigations to explain and soften
- Encourage the practice of Follow up phone call/Debriefing after Investigations
- Present Option of Mediation
- Short Video with Admin Hearing Judge as orientation to Appeal Hearing
- Recommend foster parent response is attached to report vs just maintained in file
- CPS investigation Training for Board at March face to face

INITIATIVE: Continue Starter Kit Project to Assist Resource Families with Emergency Placements

- This is our time of year to promote donations! 200 starter kits is goal by end of 2017
- NRO—needs them! Emergencies
- Report to Tonja/CHAMP on Starter Kit donation in Anchorage
- Identify contact folks in each regions for starter kids --Yurii suggested Licensing supervisor
- Update Flyer (Sabrina)
 - Make Cash Donations if Possible \$30 to \$35 (Can donate to ACRF and put in designated fund)
 - Remove Juneau ACRF office information
- Go Fund me Site (amazon wish list) For Starter Kits
- Current Donors or possible: IBEW local (Donated 8) School PTAs, Service Clubs, CHAMP, MOPS ins Mat Su, ROTC)
 - IBEW donation will go to Western Region, Brian will take out in November