

Missouri State Foster Care & Adoption Board

Meeting convened virtually via Zoom

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

MINUTES

Introductions/Meeting Information – Dana Lopez

Board Members in attendance: Steve Archer, Kristina Branch, Jennifer Foster, Linda Hosman, Dana Lopez, Crissy Mayberry, Melanie McDole, Nickie Steinhoff, Craig Stevenson & Jennifer Townsend

September Meeting Minutes – Jennifer Foster made a motion, Linda Hosman second– minutes approved.

CD: Alyssa Bish, Lauren Hall, Amy Martin, Joanie Rogers and Melissa Selsor

Guests: Pamela Foster, Kathy Haddock, Jeriane Jaegers-Breenke, Justin Logan, Lara Roberts, Katy Velasquez and Tobey Wilkerson

Transitions with Childcare – Jeriane Jaegers-Breenke & Justin Logan, DSS

Payments to providers were quite a bit behind which impacts the providers in the state; payments are now caught up. Have had conversations with other states regarding increasing the number of providers in the state. Conducted listening sessions with providers in St. Louis. Challenges – not traditional ratios, looking at policies to maintain quality care and make some changes to open up the options for care for foster youth.

IPad System: There have been issues – many providers were reluctant to use them which led to the delay in payment; also perhaps a duplication of work already being done by DESE. Working on providing additional trainings to providers regarding iPad data collection. Payment resolution requests via paper continue to be submitted which takes staff time.

Another issue, twins with the same provider with different payment rates. Department is having conversations regarding ratios, part-time/full-time, and payments. Can email for additional questions/concerns: Jeriane.jaegers-breenke@dss.mo.gov or Justin.logan@dss.mo.gov

Interim Director Introduction – Joanie Rogers, Interim Director

Joanie Rogers has been named the Interim Director of the Children’s Division, October 2020. Ms. Rogers was previously Deputy for Administration and Operations. Opened the conversation up for comments. Interim appointment will provide some consistency as was part of leadership team; in terms of longevity – will be early part of 2021 before it will be known if Ms. Rogers will be named as Director or return to prior role. Still moving forward with the same mission and vision of the team. Working to do the work better – supporting the front line better – keeping kids safe and providing permanency and stability.

Question: How can we support our front line workers at a local level? We need to support our resource parents as they support us (staff); promote communication to know what can be done better and to maintain important relationships. Contract agencies can provide parent aid services more frequently than CD.

Craig Stevenson – suggested to advocate with our elected officials regarding budget cuts/spending.

Ms. Rogers shared that she is always welcome to comments/feedback: joan.rogers@dss.mo.gov

Family First Update – Alyssa Bish & Lauren Hall

Independent Assessor (IA) Process – Goal is to assess a child prior to placement in residential facility. Based on legislation, child can be in placement 30 days for assessment. IA pilot in 3 locations, Greene Barry/Lawrence and Cole Counties; started in July 2020 for 90 days, just granted a 90 day extension; more time will give additional data. Approximately 19 IA have been completed; this pilot is just for youth referred to residential since the pilot started. IA workgroup will continue to work move forward.

RCST's have been helpful during the pilot, meeting every week for process improvements.

Independent Assessment Tools: CANS tool & DLA-20 (preferred by DMH).

Looking at CPT codes to ensure payment for time spent.

Will be partnering with OSCA, CASA and courts for training on process and assessment.

For youth that are not assessed at residential level, will need to increase Treatment Foster Care placement options. TFC will remain in residential contract and be added to child placing agency contract. One barrier seems to be the year experience requirement.

Can contact Alyssa and/or Lauren for questions related to Families First: Alyssa.l.bish@dss.mo.gov
lauren.hall@dss.mo.gov

Impact of COVID on Resource Parents– Amy Martin, Unit Manager

Impacts that have been realized; expanding childcare – 2 Memo's for review. 30-45 days ago, really started seeing the impact to families in Missouri. St. Louis area seeing increase in teen pregnancy and STI rates.

Zoom calls between birth parents and young children (under 3) are challenging; suggestion to shorten calls and increase frequency of calls.

Depression/isolation increasing for youth in residential facilities; many haven't left said facilities during pandemic. Need to determine if these youth need to remain placed in the facilities – if there is a youth who is ready to leave, we need to make sure they are moved.

COVID's impact on obtaining permanency; Jennifer Townsend mentioned reunification happening to soon, thinking lockdown will happen again; is this a safety tradeoff?

Foster Care Children Learning Virtually – Amy Martin, Unit Manager

Many youth are behind educationally due to virtual learning.

Pamela Foster – Springfield, MO, graduation specialist; students not having the supervision or discipline to get the work completed virtually; youth don't have the skills to advocate for themselves with individual teachers– huge gap in support for these students (especially in independent living situations).

Even though kids are learning virtually, BID meetings should still be happening when kids change placements. I have seen more kids moving and no BID meetings occurring. When kids do change schools after a BID meeting, a new device needs to be secured through the new school. Many kids in care do not have the basic computer skills needed for virtual learning. They may need skill building support or accommodations like teachers sending out the links for assignments ahead of time. There are many supports built into virtual platforms, like speech to text and programs that read material to the student. Parents should feel comfortable asking for more information about these supports.

Missouri OPTIONS program has made it easier to take HiSet virtually and graduate.

Distance learning has put additional responsibilities on parents in general, which, can possibly lead to resource parents not being able to accept additional placements without additional supports.

Legal Aspects Training Curriculum – Melissa Selsor, Program Specialist

Legal Aspects training is dated. Two current trainings online – Legal Aspects of Relative Placements and Legal Aspects of Concurrent Planning. Looking for additional topics that would benefit resource parents (i.e., foster parent rights, court timelines, etc.); older youth in care and their rights related to court, resource parent court report – writing and submission process. Please send ideas/suggestions to Melissa: Melissa.j.selsor@dss.mo.gov

Amy suggested sending out a practice alert regarding notification of court hearings to resource parents.

Resource Parent Handbook Revisions – Amy Martin, Unit Manager

Communications section of DSS has taken on revamping the resource parent handbook. What info would be most valuable to keep, added to handbook? Example – adding links to handbook when new trainings are added.

Please review the following questions and reply to Melissa, copy Amy, with your responses.

1. What sections in the handbook do you find most helpful? Please list as many examples as you would like.
2. What sections in the handbook do you find the least helpful? Please list as many examples as you would like.
3. What type of information do you wish was included in this handbook, but isn't?
4. Where do you go to find most of your information?
 - a. The handbook
 - b. Child's caseworker
 - c. The internet
 - d. Other Resource Parents
 - e. Other (explain)
5. Are there any other helpful topics or resources you wish were covered in this handbook? If so, what are they?
6. Would you prefer to have a printed copy of the handbook, the link for an electronic version, or both?

The birth parent handbook has already been updated; it is comprehensive and extremely helpful.

New NTDC Training – Amy Martin, Unit Manager

Missouri chosen as a pilot site for the NTDC training pilot; to date, 178 individuals have been enrolled in to the pilot program. This is a research based project which will last through 2021. This curriculum is trauma informed and will be hugely beneficial to resource parents. By the end of 2022, we will be able to make a decision on what's the best curriculum for Missouri (NTDC, STARS or STRONG).

Open Forum

Katy Velasquez– CS-10; First Steps Enrollment Form: Form states child can be staffed as medical, policy does not reflect this. Amy will research if there was a change and will return answer to the group as a whole.

Nickie Steinhoff – Resource Parents and Medical Marijuana: Melissa will be writing policy that will follow the promulgated; Amy will send draft of regulation that was sent to the secretary of state. Regulation will go live on January 21, 2021.

Craig Stevenson – Please review advisory board timeline for carve-in of behavioral health; timeline, along with other documents, were emailed to board members.

Meeting adjourned at 11:57 am by Dana Lopez.

Next meeting date: March 2, 2021, via Zoom

2021 Meeting Dates:

Tuesday, March 2nd

Tuesday, June 1st

Tuesday, September 7th

Tuesday, December 7th