



**FINAL**

DHS Children, Adults and Families  
**Child Welfare Advisory Committee**  
March 14, 2007

Members

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Arenz | <input type="checkbox"/> Don Darland              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Benjamin Hazelton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Becky Smith            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nan Waller  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Balter | <input type="checkbox"/> Sara Gelser              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pam Patton        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Christine Stetzer      |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Iris Bell   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jean Lasater  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doug Poppen       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judy Stiegler          |   |

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Mickey Serice           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nancy Keeling | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Madeline Olson | <input type="checkbox"/> Debbi Kraus-Dorn          |

Guests: Kamala Shugar – AAG, Christine Stolebarger, Lorie Morphis, Benjamin Appling, Cathy Kaufmann – Children First for Oregon, Lois Day – District 5 child welfare program manager

Minutes Recorded By Pam Pearson

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**REVIEW AGENDA / APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The January 10, 2007 minutes were approved.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Bruce Goldberg, M.D.**

Budget Update: The main issue in child welfare is how to not increase foster care, including prevention at the front end so children do not have to come into foster care. We are looking at increasing alcohol and drug treatment and mental health treatment in the Governor’s Recommended Budget. Those are two key reasons children are put in situations where they are not safe. There is a \$10 million package that uses money from OLCC revenue (SB 184). Much of that revenue goes to counties and cities for their discretionary use and that will continue. However, we are looking to target a portion to A&D treatment for parents with children at risk of coming into the child welfare system.

We are also working to increase legal representation, adding investments in staffing and looking at providing foster payments for relatives.

Recent months are showing a decrease in the number of children in foster care.

Our goals are to decrease the length of stay in out-of-home care, keep children safe, and increase the number of children reunified with their families.

Policy Update: We have been working with four legislators (Sen. Brown, Sen. Kruse, Rep. Krieger, and Rep. Schaufler) on a package of policy and budget investments to assure children are safe. These include having an appropriate children's ombudsman, making sure people coming into the system are treated appropriately, legislative oversight in reviewing key cases as a quality improvement process and adding funding for legal resources for families.

Discussion:

- Stetzer: Will help be coming to Columbia County for legal representation?
- Goldberg: It first must get through the Legislature, but he is hopeful it will get to Columbia County.
- Stiegler: That proposal is part of a package developed by an interim work group, in which the district attorney's office will handle cases through disposition and the attorney general's office will take cases after that point.
- Goldberg: The package needs some help in passing.
- Kaufmann: Has not been able to find out how many more services will be provided with the \$10 million A/D package.
- Olson: It will serve about 265 families who are either on TANF or in child welfare. These are new families that would not have received treatment. She offered to send her talking points to CWAC.
- Goldberg: Sharing the talking points will enable us to advocate in one voice.
- Patton: Asked for more information on SB 184.
- Goldberg: It will go to Ways and Means when it comes out of committee. The revenue will go toward treatment for parents and prevention, such as for underage youth drinking and drug courts.
- Patton: The Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls' priority is to decrease underage drinking for girls.
- Balter: Asked for information on the national staffing standards.
- Goldberg: The short answer is that it is absolutely a priority. The longer answer is that two national resource centers looked at child welfare: The National Resource Center on Child Protective Services (NRCCPS) and the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement (NRCOI). The NRCCPS looked at system, training and policy issues. The NRCOI looked at the staffing needed to carry out the NRCCPS recommendations. At the same time, we have been looking at workload, including recognition that not every

case requires the same kind of work, how we staff and how to assure supervision. Judy Stiegler has been a part of this. We need one strategic plan with clear timelines for when and how it will be done. We hope to have the plan in the next several weeks and will ask CWAC to review it. We have a \$3.8 million policy option package (POP) on staffing. Additional legal representation will also help with workload issues.

- Balter: The issues brought to CWAC are tied to this and so we need to know more about it.
- Foley: Agreed that it would be good if CWAC were more familiar with this work.
- Balter: The hope of this legislative session was that there would be additional resources, but there is intense competition for those resources. There is also the question of where providers fit in so that they can be drawn in to mobilize and have a stronger conversation.
- Goldberg: Appreciates Mike raising the provider issue. When he talks to communities and stakeholders about what DHS does, he first says that 85 percent of the budget is spent in the community. We need to change the belief that investing in human services increases state bureaucracy. It does not. We do need a discussion about our respective roles so that it is not about self interest by either DHS or providers, but the common interest we all share.
- Patton: The legislative budget process pits one against another because it done in silos and fragments. The provider community and advocates have tried to not pit one against the other and have fought for DHS services. When we present to the Legislature, we need to continually advocate for more caseworkers, etc., in order to keep children safe. We need to link it all back to keeping children safe. Her hope is that the provider community and DHS are both doing this.
- Goldberg: Agreed. Keeping children safe includes the Healthy Kids Plan. It is not about programs, but about people. We are in the reality of having dug a big hole and we do not have enough this legislative session to fill it. The larger message is not either/or, but some of both.
- Stiegler: Of the various packages this session, what are the top two for which CWAC should advocate? Due to our limited time and resources as a committee, we would not be able to tackle more than two.
- Goldberg: With a disclaimer that this answer is given in the moment, the first one would be increasing funding to A/D treatment. Over half of the children coming into children welfare have a parent with a substance abuse problem. This package changes the availability of services to those parents.

- Foley: Cautioned that we do not want to misinterpret that we are limited to two packages at the legislative table.
- Stiegler: That is not the intent. We would rally around all the packages.
- Foley: Her top priority is the Governor's Recommended Budget.
- Goldberg: So the second package would be everything else in the GRB!
- Kaufmann: For Children First for Oregon, A/D treatment is a top priority. They support the Juvenile Rights Project bill, payment for all relatives, and staffing. They are available to help others advocate for those issues.
- Balder: Does DHS have the ability to direct resources to the parents of children in foster care?
- Olson: Yes, that will be the target population. We are developing ways to measure outcomes. This is not money that counties can use in other ways. There are other budget packages to help counties with their past reductions. This A/D package does not go through the Oregon Health Plan.
- Goldberg: This is about prioritizing in a great sea of need. We have to make tough choices to prioritize this population of parents with children at risk and to get the dollars to the providers that can give the best outcomes. We must make sure the providers can deliver and that the right people get treated. He offered to send the A/D budget package to CWAC.
- Morphis: Parents do not always fit the mold that DHS wants. The agency's efforts are futile then.
- Goldberg: We need to better organize what we do around people, rather than organizing people around programs.
- Foley: Bruce's commitment to the front end is crucial to this message. Oregon had 41% of its substantiated cases come into foster care. The national average was 19% during the same time period. (Need to verify these percentages by Ramona). Foster care is not the solution. We must address the front-end to keep children out of the system and get the system to a manageable size.
- Goldberg: Ended by saying he is appreciative of what CWAC does.

**ACTION:**

- **Madeline Olson will send her talking points on SB 184 to CWAC.**
- **Bruce Goldberg will send the A/D budget package to CWAC.**
- **Ramona Foley will verify the percentages of substantiated cases in Oregon and nationally.**

## **UPDATE ON CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Steigler: No questions were submitted regarding the NRCOI report; therefore, we will instead give an update on this steering committee that was created in response to the NRCCPS and NRCOI reports.
- Foley: Co-chairs the steering committee with DHS Deputy Director Clyde Saiki. The NRCOI recommended we address infrastructure. We have three goals: 1) lower caseloads, 2) more supervision of front line workers and 3) consistency on how practice is done across the state.

She noted that the original University of Southern Maine study from 1992 said that Oregon does not have a single model of practice, but at least 36 models. Staff turnover occurs legitimately through promotion and retirements, but also from less legitimate reasons. Each change in caseworker leads to delays in a case.

Because the steering committee is looking at more than child welfare program and policy, she is co-chairing with Clyde. We brought in expertise in human resources to review how job descriptions should look. The steering committee membership includes:

Bob Novick, SEIU, co-chair  
Marge Reinhart, CAF Field Admin, co-chair  
Barbara Casey, SSS1, District 2  
Amanda Wheeler-Kay, SSA, District 15  
Carla Francis, SSS1, District 4  
Keri Manderfeld, CET, District 16  
Pat Carey, District Mgr, District 10  
Rene Duboise, District Mgr, District 3  
Toni Peterson, CAF Admin  
Ken McGee, HR  
John Filar, CAF Field Admin

Our policy option package on staffing had to be completed before we had the NRCOI report. Therefore, one of the first tasks of the steering committee is to look at the POP to see if it is the right strategy to get where we want. It eliminates the CET position, a position that is unique to Oregon. The CET was created in response to the 1992 University of Southern Maine

study that recommended more supervision. However, the CET is a represented position, one salary step above caseworkers. Half of the CET positions would be changed to supervisors and half to caseworkers. A more controversial piece in the POP is the plan to reduce the number of social service assistants (SSA) by half and to standardize the work they do. It is a self-funded package. If no SSA positions are cut, \$3.8 million is needed to get to the staffing standards. If the CET positions are not eliminated, the package goes to over \$20 million.

- Waller: We talked earlier about how things are interrelated. If the CETs are cut, then the training they provide will need to be provided in another way. Training is what makes workers confident to stay in their positions. Regarding the reduction in SSA positions, a link should be shown between the Oregon Safety Model and other ways to handle visitation than with the SSA. We should not assume that visits must be supervised. Community resources could be used for supervising some visits.
- Foley: A criticism of the current system is that supervisors do not know the cases. The supervisor/worker ratio of 1/9.5 is much higher than national standards. In some communities, the SSAs are the only available resources to supervise visits. We do not want to eliminate visits because no one is available to supervise.
- Stiegler: It may be that SSAs have picked up the slack because of the unavailability of others to supervise visits, not because it was an appropriate role for them. We want the most experienced people having contact with the family and we want the clerical/administrative aspects handled by someone other than the caseworker.
- Foley: SSAs spend 55% of their time with the families, compared with caseworkers at 22%. We want to change that. In addition, in court the caseworker is seen as adversarial by the parent and it is the SSA who approaches the parent to set up the visit, thus creating a connection between parent and SSA.
- Stiegler: More internal communication is needed to resolve barriers and challenges. It has not been a cohesive move to a model of consistency. The change will create internal dynamics.
- Foley: A staff survey by the NRCOI found the SSA and CET jobs were not done consistently across the state.
- Morphis: Provided anecdotal information about how visits are interpreted and judged by the person supervising the visit.

- Balter: Some things need to be centralized and uniform and others could be allowed to be flexible. Also, stressors and workload cause a bleeding-away from job descriptions. Cautioned against posturing the conversation with language such as “rouge workers” or “incorrigible,” but rather say you are dealing with unreasonable demands and recognize the agency is where it is at because of those demands.
- Patton: Be careful that you do not get to a point where workers will not do anything not in their job descriptions.
- Stiegler: Empower the system to give flexibility within boundaries, with a better definition of the boundaries.
- Foley: We want to go to more evidence-based practice and avoid unnecessary case transfers because we have evidence that that delays a case.
- Waller: This is not only about developing consistency and making things more doable, but framing the culture of the organization.
- Stiegler: The keystone is getting the culture down to the very bottom of the structure.

### **HOW TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE AND DECREASE NUMBERS IN FOSTER CARE – CONSENSUS ON TWO RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUBMIT TO BRUCE GOLDBERG**

- Stiegler: Referred to the 3/5/07 memo from the Future Issues Work Group (FIWG).
- Hazelton: The first recommendation in that memo is consistent with what Dr. Goldberg said earlier today.
- Stiegler: FIWG refined the first recommendation slightly from what CWAC reviewed at the 1/10/07 meeting. The second recommendation addresses keeping children safe and is the focus of today’s discussion.
- Hazelton: We tried to narrow the focus. Though we want to keep all children safe, we recognize that for this purpose, we are narrowing it to children in the DHS child welfare system. Our recommendation is consistent with what DHS is trying to do. The data came from a Citizen Review Board survey in March 2006 and is not representative of all cases or the entire state.
- Foley: DHS data shows face-to-face contact with the child to be somewhat lower, about 60%.
- Hazelton: This recommendation of increasing face-to-face contact by 12% recognizes that having regular contact that goes beyond a superficial visit will improve outcomes.

- Balter: We realize we cannot get to 100% right away, but a 12% increase will show movement in that direction.
- Foley: Open CPS cases are CAF's responsibility even if the child does not come into care.
- Stiegler: Yes, we are not talking only about foster care, but any open case.
- Foley: We can use the percentages for face-to-face for any case and for visits with the parent. Our data will be different than what the CRB survey showed.
- Stiegler: Yes, we will want accurate data for all open cases. Face-to-face visits are even more important when the child remains in the home.
- Foley: This will be a big issue for the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Our data will be able to tell where the visit is occurring, which is an element the CFSR wants to capture.
- Stiegler: We will adjust our recommendation to clarify that it is for any child in an open case and adjust the data accordingly. The last paragraph of the FIWG memo addresses the family involved with DHS in a non-child welfare capacity and asks if there can be some communication with child welfare when potentially at-risk children are identified.
- Foley: Employees working with those families are mandatory reporters. Calls to child welfare do come in from those employees.
- Stiegler: This is meant to go beyond those situations that require a report from a mandatory reporter in order to have a preventive component.
- Foley: CPS is not preventive. We are trying to address services to these populations so that they do not have to come to CPS to get services.
- Patton: That was why AFS and SCF were combined into CAF.
- Foley: The Family Support Connection Program in place in some counties is for TANF families that need services beyond what TANF can provide – for families not in need of CPS.
- Waller: What should be occurring during the face-to-face visit to stabilize the placement and assure the child's safety? That is the purpose of the visit.
- Keeling: The child welfare procedure manual will do a good job in telling workers what to look for and do during the visit.
- Foley: We cannot know if a child is safe if we are not making the visits; however, we can also make the visit and not know if a child is safe. For example, in the Jordan Knapp case, many people were making contact and did not see the child was starving.
- Waller: Suggested that workers be given certain expectations of what the visit should entail.

- Stolebarger: Suggested that the last paragraph in the 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation mention linking with the schools for programs that families can access for prevention.
- Stetzer: In her school, that link is the school counselor. She depends on the counselor to be knowledgeable about social service agencies. Recognizes that some counselors may not be used by their schools in that way.
- Stiegler: Cautioned that while that link is important, for the purpose of this recommendation to Bruce Goldberg, we are limiting ourselves to what is under DHS' control. We recognize all the different components to the problems, but for the prevention piece, we looked only at what is within DHS. We must shy away from increasing DHS' obligations beyond its boundaries. There are obligations on the part of education, local commissions, etc. to make these connections and links.
- Waller: In terms of the face-to-face visits, the expectation should be that the person visiting the child understands the links in the wrap-around and then makes the needed connections.
- Foley: Met with Judge Koch who described a case in which the parents had mental health issues. The baby was safe at the time. He asked if DHS could provide services even though there was no substantiated case of abuse or neglect. The Legislature has not funded us to do so; however, we know that is when families can be well served. Other states have a multiple response system that does not require a substantiated case to serve the family. If Oregon's economy continues to improve, we may be able to do that. However, we would need a commitment to have the services available.
- Stetzer: When her school sees the needs of a family, they contact DHS, but the child must have bruises before CPS can help.
- Balter: Reminded the committee that FIWG started with two pages of suggested recommendations and narrowed them down to two. We need to finalize these draft recommendations so that they can be approved and forwarded to Bruce Goldberg so that he can use them in his presentations to Ways and Means.
- Stiegler: She will use the above discussion to clarify that the recommendation is meant for any open child welfare case. The last paragraph regarding prevention will be revised so that it does not require an automatic referral, but also gets away from a silo mentality within the department. FIWG will review the next version of the recommendations. It will not be brought back to CWAC. We will follow the same process we used for finalizing the recommendation regarding the definition of "special needs."

**MOTION:** A motion was made, seconded and approved that CWAC accept the content of the recommendations based on the above discussion and authorized the CWAC chair to finalize the recommendations and send them to DHS Director Bruce Goldberg.

- Stiegler: She has used some of CWAC's documents in her work and the communities have been amazed at what the committee has been able to reach consensus on.
- Morphis: Asked how an individual citizen can help when the citizen has concerns about internal agency matters.
- Foley: Each region has a management structure for grievances. The Legislature has asked us to look at the grievance process. When a CPS case is opened, we require that parents receive written material regarding the status of the case.
- Taylor: Having parents attend CWAC meetings gives a unique perspective and voice.

**ACTION:**

- **Revise the recommendation to clarify that it is for any child in an open case and adjust the data accordingly.**
- **The final recommendations will be sent to Bruce Goldberg after review and approval by FIWG. Copies will be sent to CWAC.**

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR REPORT – RAMONA FOLEY**

2007 Child Welfare Budget Forecast

- Foley: Judy Mohr-Peterson is here to help with the discussion. Our ability to forecast has improved, but it is still a prediction. About a month ago, Judy Mohr-Peterson participated in a meeting with some CWAC members. There was enough interest, we brought her here today. We will periodically have her come to CWAC meetings to bring you updates.
- Mohr-Peterson: The information distributed today is similar to what was sent earlier. It includes more information on page 1 on biennial averages, DHS-wide. Addiction and Mental Health Services Division is not included because their forecast is not completed. The next rebalance will be in April. Actual numbers are shown on the charts up to the Fall 2006 forecast. Each month we analyze the difference between what was forecast and actual numbers.

- Foley: Forecasting cannot answer why the numbers are what they are.
- Mohr-Peterson: The biennial average comparison charts on pages 1-2 do not include what the POPs will do. The Foster Care Graph includes some residential treatment. It would be more appropriately labeled “Out of Home Care.” It shows an increase for two years beginning in July 2003. After the Fall 2006 forecast, it decreased.
- Foley: It tracks nicely around a peak in meth arrests. Law enforcement is seeing fewer arrests now and that has affected the number of children coming into care.
- Hazelton: Are forecasts done by county?
- Mohr-Peterson: No.
- Foley: The *Status of Children* will include county data. The data for 2006 will show fewer children entered care and more left foster care than in 2005.
- Balter: Adoption assistance also impacts the decrease in foster care. Subsidized guardianship may also contribute to the decrease in foster care.
- Mohr-Peterson: Agreed.
- Balter: Does the number of available foster parents have an impact? If there are not enough foster parents, are children placed somewhere else?
- Foley: National research shows that it does make an impact. We do not know if this decrease proves good practice or bad practice.
- Stiegler: We cannot read too much into the numbers.
- Foley: It does influence which positions we can fill..
- Mohr-Peterson: Data shows an increase in the number of reports made and the number of substantiated cases, but no corresponding increase in foster care or in-home cases.
- Foley: We are looking to see if there is an increase in relative placements. We would be less concerned about the decrease in foster care if we saw an increase in in-home cases.
- Mohr-Peterson: Adoption assistance and guardianship are both up, as we expected.
- Foley: We expect adoption assistance to level off as the safety model comes into place.
- Balter: Data could be used to show the work that has been done.
- Foley: That is why we are careful to show the increase in substantiated cases.
- Balter: When resources were cut, law enforcement stopped picking kids up because they had no where to put them.

- Foley: There is no evidence of the face-to-face requirements having a negative influence of causing workers to not open cases to avoid having to make the visits.
- Waller: Does the total number in foster care include voluntary placements?
- Foley: Yes, any out-of-home care.
- Mohr-Peterson: The forecast will vary and we acknowledge the variance with the dashed lines.
- Hazelton: If we had the data by county, we could see if certain communities are driving the numbers.
- Mohr-Peterson: We do look at county data to see if any fall outside the norm. We then contact them to find out what is going on in the community.

**ACTION: Judy Mohr-Peterson will be invited to update CWAC periodically.**

### **OREGON SAFETY MODEL (OSM) – Lois Day**

- Foley: Invited Lois Day to take advantage of having someone who is implementing the model at the local level talk to CWAC.
- Day: There is a statewide implementation team that meets every other week, sharing what they are hearing in their communities and disseminating good practice back to the local offices. They are helping to move the model forward. Each local office then implements the model and has a person identified as its OSM branch coordinator. This is the first time she is part of an effort in DHS to roll out a model in such a planned way. Staff were first trained on the concepts, then the rule changes and now we have a procedure manual. That process has helped workers understand why the changes are being made. The delay in implementing the rules allowed us to have conversations with workers on the concepts. We used case scenarios to walk through the concepts. We have had a series of meetings with community partners, including school districts and early intervention teams. After the statewide training is completed, we will hold weekly staff meetings, each based on a concept, how we will handle a situation differently now and what barriers there may be to implementing the concept. We do similar weekly meetings with managers. We are discussing how supervisors are to support the caseworkers.

We also have an internal committee of staff to look at office structure. We delayed talking about structure until now to avoid structure driving practice. This committee includes broad representation of staff.

She interfaces with the statewide implementation team, bringing them examples of what works well in her community. Other local offices do the same. The implementation team then considers what can work statewide.

One request she heard from caseworkers was a checklist for face-to-face visits. However, we don't want these visits to be something to check off as a task accomplished. What workers want is a tool to guide the visits so that they are productive and will help them fulfill the intent of the visits.

She recognizes that individuals handle change differently. One-third were ready back in October, another third are moving along at the rate you anticipate and another third are resistant. The last third is a group that can be helpful in identifying barriers and making sure we apply the model consistently for families.

- Stetzer: Asked if what Lois described is true for other counties besides Lane.
- Day: From the feedback she gets from the implementation team and at child welfare program managers meetings, other local offices are having similar discussions with staff and partners and working to problem solve.
- Keeling: Every branch has an Oregon Safety Model branch coordinator.
- Foley: Lane County has the advantage in that Lois was the acting Adoptions Manager in Central Office when the Holder report first came out.
- Stetzer: She has not heard about any community meetings in her area and so is concerned that they may be behind schedule.
- Keeling: It is very exciting to see it taking place in the field.
- Stiegler: However, we are not hearing that excitement and support in some communities.
- Foley: It is not known which third CWAC is hearing from. She described a letter commenting on the draft rules that started with the need to change current practice due to the Ashley Pond case, but concluded with a question asking why we were changing. We are taking advantage of state forums to talk to judges, CRB, and others.

- Stiegler: It is good there is a local person identified as a local branch coordinator for the model. However, that requires some modicum of consistency in the presentation so the message is consistent.
- Keeling: Is not surprised not all counties are yet holding community meetings because they are in the midst of training staff.
- Peterson: We are developing materials for the community training.
- Sherbo: Those materials should include the procedure manual.
- Foley: Chapter 1 is out and chapters 2 and 3 will be ready in about two weeks. We will then develop a schedule for the remaining chapters. The chapters will be available to CWAC online.
- Patton: Lois' description of why a checklist for face-to-face visits would not be developed reminded her of how workers need training on how to work with specific populations of children, i.e., boys, girls and teens. Without that training, it is left up to the personality of the worker.
- Foley: Agrees about the need for role clarification and the importance of the caseworker supervising the visit in order to establish a relationship with the child.
- Keeling: The PSU training curriculum changes will address how to conduct these visits.
- Day: She is also talking to supervisors about how to mentor workers and support the training they received. As for the community meetings, each district has an implementation plan that includes how to address the community. Each has a plan with its own timing.
- Foley: Will reinforce to the local managers the need to communicate with partners.
- Stiegler: All CWAC members have contacts in the community and as the model roles out, we can help.

## **TEENS SUBCOMMITTEE**

- Stiegler: Pam Patton has volunteered to chair the Teens Subcommittee. FIWG will craft a template of issues to address. The first Teens Subcommittee meeting will be with the FIWG to work on the agenda and tasks.
- Patton: If you have a teen issue, please send it to Judy Stiegler so that it is added to the list.
- Stiegler: We will look at the past membership and reconstitute it. If you are interested, let her know.

**ACTION: Contact Judy Stiegler if interested in being a member of the subcommittee and if you have issues for the subcommittee to address.**

**OTHER**

- Taylor: the national child abuse and neglect conference will be in April in Portland.
- Foley: The *Status of Children* will be available before the May 9 CWAC meeting.

Meeting adjourned.