

**Sensitive Review Report**  
**April 28, 2008**

**Membership:**

Senator Margaret Carter  
Senator Jeff Kruse  
Senator Monnes Anderson  
Senator Jackie Winters  
Representative Linda Flores  
Representative Sara Gelser  
Representative Wayne Krieger  
Representative Ron Maurer  
Representative Mike Schaufler  
Representative Carolyn Tomei  
Bruce Goldberg, Director  
Bryan Johnston, Assistant Director  
Sergio Hayakawa Leon, Consulate of Mexico Protection  
Freda Mann, Psy.D.  
Barbara Mildner, CASA

**Ad Hoc members:**

Bill Taylor, Legislative Counsel  
Mickey Serice, Deputy Assistant Director  
Nancy Keeling, Administrator  
Sandra Chase, District Manager  
Margaret Kiser, Supervisor  
Caroline Burnell, Legislative Liaison

**Process:**

Dr. Goldberg requested a Sensitive Review Committee on 11-5-07. The Committee met four times on the following dates:

**December 19, 2007**

**January 22, 2008**

**February 13, 2008**

**March 19, 2008**

The Committee began by a review of the Sensitive Review Committee process and the confidentiality laws under which it operates. Committee members were provided confidential information from the record to review and were provided related policies to review and reference as the process proceeded. Committee discussions focused on the following:

- clarification of policies, practice, issues and questions,
- discussion of Committee findings,
- discussion of potential enhancements to the child welfare system, and
- consensus on recommendations.

### **Findings:**

The Committee came to a consensus on all findings and recommendations. The Committee agreed that the following areas in the child welfare system would benefit from some enhancements to policies, procedures and practice:

- **Adoption Committee Process**
- **Clarity of confidentiality regulations for foster parents**
- **Stronger partnership by DHS with Foreign Consulates**
- **Clearer roles between foster parents and relatives**
- **Stronger activities by DHS toward relatives and significant others**

### **Conclusions/Recommendations:**

Adoption Committee Process:

1. The Committee discussed and considered several potential recommendations in this area. It was decided to defer all recommendations from this Committee to a special work group that will include members from DHS, the Legislature and the Judicial Department.

Some areas of consideration for this work group will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Making the recording of the Adoption Committees available to all parties in the dependency matter

- Reviewing the Adoption Committee process and the work of the Adoption Committee Process Work Group (an ongoing DHS work group) to determine efficiencies and enhancements to this process
- Requiring that all Adoption Committees record their reviews, deliberations and rationale for decisions and recommendations
- Allowing the CASA appointed to the dependency case to present recommendations to the Adoption Committee regarding placement for the child
- Requiring the Adoption Committee to consider the recommendations made by the CASA
- Proposing legislation to increase the time to establish a “caregiver relationship” from 6 months to 12 months (ORS 419B.116(1)(a)(ii) and 419B.116(1)(b)).

Clarity of confidentiality regulations for foster parents:

2. DHS will increase the training to foster parents about confidentiality of children in foster care. This training will emphasize the obligation to protect the privacy of individuals receiving foster care services as well as protecting the privacy and circumstances that brought families into foster care services, will site examples for discussion and will clearly state the graduated sanctions for noncompliance with this rule.
3. DHS will clarify rules in the foster care program regarding confidentiality. This clarification will specifically outline the process of graduated sanctions up to and including revocation of certification to be a foster parent.
4. In order to protect the privacy of children and families receiving services in the foster care system, DHS will be expected to enforce this rule regarding confidentiality and graduated sanctions.

Stronger partnership by DHS with Foreign Consulates:

5. DHS will increase the training regarding the requirement for DHS to notify the appropriate Consulate of any child taken into DHS custody if one or both

of the parents are potential Foreign Nationals. This training will emphasize early identification of the child's nationality and early notification to the appropriate Consulate.

Clearer roles between foster parents and relatives:

6. DHS will increase training to foster and adoptive parents and those seeking to become foster or adoptive parents. Specifically, DHS will emphasize that people seeking to be adoptive parents will not be encouraged to provide foster care.
7. As resources become available, DHS will explore development of a mentor program for foster parents and will train foster parents to become mentors and coaches for parents who have children in foster care. Through this training, DHS will seek a systemic change in practice, in culture and in philosophy for staff and foster parents by seeking ways to successfully support parents and or relatives with children in foster care (e.g., visitation in more naturalistic settings, foster parents coaching parents to support reunification, etc).

Stronger activities by DHS toward relatives and significant others:

8. DHS will revise rules and will increase training to staff regarding relatives and significant people in the child's life. The rule revision and the training will emphasize that DHS staff must work to involve people who are a part of the child's life early and assertively.
9. DHS will work with the legislature to seek additional funds to help the department enhance current programs. Some areas of consideration will include the following:
  - Resources for incarcerated parents and parents in treatment programs who have children in foster care
  - More resources to help support parents who need longer treatment and can successfully seek exceptions to the ASFA timeline
  - Resources for child care to support working foster parents