Child Welfare Project and Implementation Plan Steering Team

Tuesday, December 18, 2018
1:30PM-4:00PM
Department of Human Services Building (HSB-137 A-D)
500 Summer Street NE, Salem, OR

Vision: Every child and family has a safe and positive environment in which to live and develop.

Conference call information:
Dial in: 1-888-204-5984
Participant Code: 547086

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dana Ainam, Social Services Department Manager, Grand Ronde Tribe</td>
<td>Ajit Jetmalani, M.D., Child Psychiatry, Oregon Health &amp; Science University</td>
<td>April Munks, Child Welfare District 10 Program Manager, DHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shannon Biteng, Child Welfare Field Administrator, DHS</td>
<td>Marilyn Jones, Child Welfare Director, DHS</td>
<td>Fariborz Pakseresht, Director, DHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Buckley, Former Legislator, Oregon State Representative</td>
<td>Tami Kane-Suleiman, Child Protective Services Manager, DHS</td>
<td>Kimberly Ricketts, Strategic Consulting Managing Director, Casey Family Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Gelser, Senator, Oregon State Senate</td>
<td>Belinda Kjensrud, Parent Mentor, Parents Anonymous</td>
<td>Ben Sand, CEO, Portland Leadership Foundation – Embrace</td>
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<td>Carolyn Graf, Board Member, Oregon Foster Parent Association</td>
<td>Anani Kuffner, MAPS, DHS</td>
<td>Derenda Schubert, Executive Director, Bridge Meadows</td>
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<td>Dana Hargunani, Chief Medical Officer, Oregon Health Authority</td>
<td>Margie Macleod, Vice President of Quality Management, Morrison Child &amp; Family Services</td>
<td>Nathaniel Schwab, Representative, Oregon Foster Youth Connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Hassen, Juvenile Law &amp; Policy Counsel, Oregon Judicial Department</td>
<td>Francis Maher, Executive Director, St. Mary’s Home for Boys</td>
<td>Kris Scrabeck, Community Resource Manager, Oregon Youth Authority</td>
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<td>Hon. Patrick Henry, Multnomah County Circuit Court</td>
<td>Jana Mclellan, Child Welfare Deputy Director, DHS</td>
<td>Wenonoa Spivak, Director of Programs &amp; Education, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Jackson County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traci Savoy Jack, Strategic Consulting Director, Casey Family Programs</td>
<td>Amy Miller, Deputy Director, Oregon Office of Public Defense</td>
<td>Kalisha Stout, Permanency Supervisor for District 2, DHS</td>
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Child Welfare Project and Implementation Plan Steering Team Agenda
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PRESENTER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:30-1:40</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>• Introductions&lt;br&gt;• What this meeting will accomplish</td>
<td>Shannon Biteng</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:40-1:50</td>
<td>Child Welfare updates</td>
<td>• Hear from Child Welfare leadership</td>
<td>Marilyn Jones</td>
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<td>1:50-2:05</td>
<td>Overview of projects</td>
<td>• Review project status update sheet</td>
<td>Shannon Biteng</td>
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<td>2:05-2:50</td>
<td>Enhance Community Engagement</td>
<td>• Overview of proposal&lt;br&gt;• Feedback&lt;br&gt;• Next steps</td>
<td>Enhance Community Engagement Workgroup</td>
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<td>2:50-3:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>3:00-3:45</td>
<td>Caregiver Retention &amp; Support</td>
<td>• Project work updates&lt;br&gt;• Proposal to Foster Care Program Manager</td>
<td>Caregiver Retention &amp; Support Workgroup</td>
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<td>3:45-4:00</td>
<td>Action Items / Closing</td>
<td>• Summarize any action items&lt;br&gt;• Doodle poll for upcoming meeting dates</td>
<td>Shannon Biteng</td>
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<td>(15 Min)</td>
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### Action Items

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<th>Assign Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Owner</th>
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### Parking lot

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic / Purpose</th>
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### Completed Action Items

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<th>Assign Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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## Decision Log

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<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Date of decision</th>
<th>Who made decision?</th>
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### Child Welfare Project and Implementation Plan Tracking Sheet

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Project Manager</th>
<th>Program Lead</th>
<th>Transferring to CW</th>
<th>Targeted Completion</th>
<th>Handoff Status</th>
<th>October Status</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>Status Update</th>
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| Enhance state and district level community engagement | TBD             | Stacy Lake and Melissa Sampson-Grier | Yes                 | December 2018       | Proceed with caution | Proceed with caution | Proceed with caution | • Workgroup completed a draft proposal for elements of community engagement which is being presented December 18, 2018 to steering team.  
• Workgroup meeting held to finalize documents and strategies on achieving those principles. |
| Completion of the statewide listening tour and report development | Kelsi Eisele    | Shannon Biteng                        | Yes                 | Spring 2018         | NA             | At risk         | Proceed with caution | • D4, D5 and D8 staff listening sessions have been completed.  
• Staff listening session dates for District 1 and 14 will be rescheduled for 2019.  
• District tours completed by the Executive Projects team for the districts tours that took place prior to August. Office of Organizational Change are reviewing and analyzing those notes. |
| Caregiver training redesign                      | Rose Cokeley    | Greg Westbrooks and Karyn Schimmel   | Yes                 | June 2019           | On track       | On track        | On track       | • Workgroup meeting held on October 18, 2018 where caregiver Areas of Skills and Knowledge (ASK) were finalized. This is a list of skills and knowledge that caregivers will obtain and grow from during their training experience.  
• Finalized ASK was presented to CW leadership for approval on December 10, 2018.  
• November 15, 2018 the training workgroup discussed training delivery options. |
| Caregiver retention and support                  | Rose Cokeley    | Greg Westbrooks                       | Yes                 | December 2018       | At risk        | At risk         | Proceed with caution | • Rose has a draft proposal from the workgroup around caregiver retention and support efforts. Draft proposal submitted to Greg in November.  
• Office of Continuous Improvement mapped all retention and recruitment efforts.  
• Workgroup presented some recommendations regarding communication between Oregon DHS CW and caregivers to the Statewide Foster Care Steering Committee. |
| Certification and well-being staffing’s          | NA              | Greg Westbrooks                       | Yes                 | December 2018       | On track       | On track        | Closed         | • Project will combine with Coordinated Response to Abuse.  
• Email to workgroup sent November 19, 2018 thanking them for their work and notification that this project has closed and recommendations transferred to Coordinated Response to Abuse. |
| Recruitment and retention of SSS1’s              | Brooke Hall     | Shannon Biteng                        | Yes                 | December 2018       | On track       | On track        | On track       | • Office of Continuous Improvement helped map the onboard processes in November 6, 2018.  
• Finalized Exit Survey with the Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation.  
• Selected vendor to develop Realistic Job Preview (RJP) Videos.  
• Executed contract for RJP vendor. |
| Practice model fidelity                           | Brooke Hall and Erin Anhoury | Tami-Kane Suleiman and Lacey Andresen | Yes                 | December 2018       | On track       | At risk         | Proceed with caution | • Meet with Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation to discuss development of one tracking mechanism for fidelity reviews on November 13, 2018.  
• Workgroup held on November 6, 2018 to discuss pilot for new court report and transition.  
• Meeting with QA manager to discuss QA and fidelity reviews.  
• Created workgroup for implementation for the pilot court report and transition meetings with the goal of the pilot beginning in January. |

Updated as of 12/17/18
- Map of the family support and transfer process was created.
- Communication plan developed, and training plan is in the process.
- Proficiency testing work was moved to supervisor training project.

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| Supervisor training redesign | Kim Lorz | Karyn Schimmels and Shannon Biteng | Yes | June 2019 | At risk | At risk | At risk | • New project manager, Kim, took over in November and the revamping workgroup.  
• Review/edit charter and creating agenda for January workgroup meeting.  
• Partnered with Project Manager from the Executive Team’s Clinical Supervision workgroup to develop a plan that would prevent duplicative work while supporting one another’s efforts. |
| Coordinated response to abuse | Needs project manager for CW tasks | Lacey Andresen, Tami Kane-Suleiman, and Greg Westbrooks | Yes | December 2018 | On track | At risk | At risk | • Only sub-task 1, 7 and 15 are exclusive to CW  
  o 1: OCWP policy making procedure  
  o 7: Update Sensitive Issue Review Protocol  
  o 15: Review foster home certification exceptions  
• All other cross agency tasks need to be pulled out of this project and transferred to the Executive Projects team for project management.  
• Certification and Well-being project will be added to remaining tasks for this project.  
• Implementation of certification. reviews being added to the scope of this project. |
| Aligning policy, procedure and best practice | Lee Lower | Shannon Biteng | Yes | December 2018 | Proceed with caution | At risk | On track | • Procedure manual will be completed and distributed to staff in 2019.  
• Publishing has dedicated more resources to the project to expedite the project and now has 3 FTE working on it to meet the timeline.  
• Publishing continues to work on populating manual template with the contents in preparation for publication.  
• Workgroup continues to meet every two weeks to keep communication clear and keep the project moving forward. |
| Centralized screening | Alain Datcher | Kristen Khamnohack | Yes | Go Live: April 2019 | Proceed with caution | On track | Closed | • Hotline shift schedule has been finalized.  
• October was a stabilization period. In November District 13, 8 and 10 will move over.  
• ORCAH now screens reports for Districts 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15. |
Department of Human Services Child Welfare Program
Proposal for Community Engagement

Background
The Enhancing Community Engagement Workgroup launched in January of 2018 as part of the Unified Child and Youth Safety Implementation Plan, under the leadership of Chuck Dunn and Stacy Lake, Child Welfare Program Managers, and Melissa Sampson-Grier, Cross Systems & Equity Coordinator. Intensive work was done in the months leading up to the kick-off meeting to align central office efforts related to community engagement and to build relationships with a broad array of community partners impacted by, or impacting, child welfare. We moved through a process of co-development of the Project Charter, defined workgroup norms, and took the time to have difficult conversations about power, language, and trust. With that foundation, we developed a vision for Community Engagement and began to frame problems and solutions related to that vision. From this work we developed the attached Principles of Community Engagement as the framework for engagement, and the associated recommendations contained in this proposal.

Purpose
The purpose of this project is to enhance state and district level community engagement to work towards building trust and increasing responsiveness and collaboration between DHS child welfare, bio families, foster and adoptive families, relative caregivers, children, youth, Tribes, service providers, community partners, and historically marginalized populations.

Project Stakeholders
This project will be intentional about engaging diverse stakeholders with broad array of lived experiences, inclusive of race, class, and culture, and representing both visible and invisible diversity. Including but not limited to those with lived experience with houselessness, poverty, and other communities as self-defined. Including but not limited to:

- Advocacy organizations
- Adoptive families
- All Child Welfare employees
- Biological parents/family members
- Citizen Review Boards
- Communities of Color
- Coordinated Care Organizations
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- Courts/Attorneys
- Current/former foster youth (including tribal, group home, BRS, OYA)
- English as a Second Language community
- Enhancing Community Engagement Workgroup
- Faith Community
- Foster parents (relative, non-relative, therapeutic, child specific)
- Incarcerated parents
- Law Enforcement
- LGBTQIA2S Communities
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Providers (physical health, mental health, youth services, education, developmental disability, peer support services, abuse assessment
Department of Human Services Child Welfare Program  
Proposal for Community Engagement

- centers, early childhood, addiction & recovery, domestic violence, LGBTQ, housing services)
- Refugee and Immigrant community
- Tribal representatives

DHS Child Welfare Accountability & Follow Through

1. Endorse and incorporate the Principles of Community Engagement as developed by the workgroup
2. Take action on the recommended steps outlined under each element of the Principles of Community Engagement
3. Report back to workgroup with response to achieve outcomes and next steps to be taken within 30 days.
4. Invest in capacity to support the continuation of Enhancing Community Engagement Workgroup
5. After initial review and response, allow workgroup to conduct a 30-day stakeholder feedback period prior to finalization of the Principles of Community Engagement.

There are potential risks to the success of this project, and other risks associated with diminished community engagement on the day-to-day for children and families involved with child welfare. Many of those risks are addressed by recommended strategies across each principle. However, there are risks of not responding to this proposal, which include decreased trust with stakeholders and the community at-large, decreased responsiveness to collaboration by partners, and decreased transparency. We see this proposal as a first step in a new dialogue about how to better walk together to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities. The principles represent the culture we want for Child Welfare and DHS as a whole.

Recommended Actions by Principle:

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

We envision a child welfare program that acknowledges responsibility for racial disproportionality and disparities that exist in child welfare. We strive for a future where one’s family history, race/ethnicity, culture, class, ability, gender identity, or sexual orientation does not predict their outcomes. We support efforts to institutionalize both equity and inclusion within the agencies practices, staffing, and outreach efforts.

Strategies:
- Embed equity lens across each program area in DHS & throughout CW policies, procedures and practices.
- Update educational requirements to be inclusive of lived experience in addition to education.
- Develop ongoing processes at all levels to normalize conversations about race, class, culture, privilege, and power.
Department of Human Services Child Welfare Program
Proposal for Community Engagement

- Collaborate with Tribes and community partners to provide culturally specific recruitment and training strategies and assist in the certification process for foster, adoptive and relative placements.
- Prioritize and communicate from top leadership the commitment to being an anti-racist organization.
- Require mandatory cultural responsiveness training for all levels of staff, including the history of child welfare, ICWA, & community.
- Update recruitment, hiring and retention practices to increase diversity.
- Examine history of systemic racism in child welfare and its impact on the children, families, community, and the workforce.
- Develop a plan to increase cross systems collaboration to improve outcomes for families.
- Collect, display and message accurate and timely data on racial disproportionality, disparities & service equity.

TRAUMA INFORMED

We envision a child welfare program that uses trauma informed practices to build relationships with parents, foster and adoptive families, relative caregivers, children, youth, Tribes, service providers, community partners, and historically marginalized populations.

Strategies:

- Become a trauma informed organization with oversight.
- Develop a plan to change the culture of how staff treat children, youth, families, and foster families. Staff should understand the impact of trauma on behavior.
- Acknowledge power dynamics and develop plans to mitigate impact.
- Acknowledge history of the agency and communicate plan for new direction.
- Recognize and utilize the human capital of volunteers.
- Create a more transparent allegation process with written information that is mirrored for staff, youth, and families.
- Encourage trauma informed discipline over punishment for behavior.
- Encourage staff to have positive role in their communities by allowing 2 hours on a monthly basis for volunteer activities.

CREATING SPACE FOR LEADERSHIP

We envision a child welfare program that creates space for communities to lead by identifying their own system barriers as well as their strengths and developing their own solutions to problems.
Department of Human Services Child Welfare Program
Proposal for Community Engagement

Strategies:

- Host more opportunities for listening: forums, workgroups, district advisory bodies, etc.
- Ask the community to express their own needs, goals and address issues in their own ways.
- Include foster parents on “team” and define what that means.
- Develop joint trainings for staff, foster parents, bio-parents.
- Identify staff across language, race and culture to work with community.
- Develop a bio-parents bill of rights with a grievance procedure.
- Develop co-training roles with those with lived experience and compensate at same level as staff.
- Develop a framework for staff that allows space for individualism.
- Collaborate with community to provide opportunities for staff training.
- Incorporate the use of digital technology, social media, and other avenues in communication strategies to engage with community.
- Use data to highlight racial disproportionality, disparities and service equity.
- Utilize Enhancing Community Engagement workgroup as a resource in policy, procedure and practice changes. Workgroup brings a vast amount of expertise across program areas and lived experiences.

COLLABORATING WITH FLEXIBILITY

We envision a child welfare program that collaborates by finding common ground, being flexible, and meeting people where they are. We promote a culture of participation and seek community driven solutions to system problems.

Strategies:

- Approach families with a different mindset. I’m here to help and believe people can change. Clear culture and expectations.
- Collaborate to develop cross training opportunities for staff, foster parents, community, and service providers.
- Needs identified by youth, parents, families and communities.
- Set realistic timelines for projects that include time to have courageous conversations with community.
- Provide opportunities for caseworkers to utilize peer-to-peer support model.
- Remove participation barriers for community members at all levels (state, local, and children/youth and family).
- Let families define their own success.
- Decide when and where power can be shared and then clarify with staff and families.
- Require transparent, fair and open processes to establish funding opportunities (RFP’s, contacts, grants, etc.) for new programs.
- Acknowledge and be clear what power is/ is not and why it is important.
Department of Human Services Child Welfare Program
Proposal for Community Engagement

- Consider creating kid-specific and parent specific policies.
- Break down silos with housing services.

COMMUNICATION WITH ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND FOLLOW THROUGH

We envision a child welfare program that is accountable to the community by listening, communicating consistently and frequently, and most importantly, following through and reporting back. We commit to capturing the range of views and ideas that come from genuine engagement and want participants to know their contributions will impact the direction and decisions of child welfare.

Strategies:

- Develop an external communications plan that utilizes all media platforms to communicate work underway at child welfare. Share success stories.
- Invest in organizations already serving the community.
- Engage stakeholders, parents, foster parents, staff, etc and survey regularly for feedback.
- Conduct a power analysis.
- Reduce caseloads by determining appropriate distribution.
- Ask families, parents, communities what they need, explain ‘why” when you are not able to meet the need, and offer alternative solutions.
- Teach community how to expand or replicate programs.
- Engage stakeholders in staff reviews annually, especially parents, youth, foster parents.
- Share monthly Governor’s report with stakeholders.
- Use various media forums to share heartwarming stories.
- Share information in an authentic way with community and families, including good news, bad news, and accurate updates on processes.
- Establish key milestones for cases with associated tools so workers know what they should be doing.
- Enforce the Foster Parent Bill of Rights.
- Use national certification to certify caseworkers and supervisors who are not trained social workers.
- Be intentional when presenting information to ensure the message and messengers reflect the community.
- Conduct periodic case assessments to evaluate communication, safety, legality, timeliness.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

We envision a child welfare program that plans ahead, has a clearly defined purpose, and meets the interests of/and is inclusive of all stakeholders. We are clear and open about the process of
Department of Human Services Child Welfare Program
Proposal for Community Engagement

community engagement and provide accessible information that participants need to know to contribute in meaningful ways.

Strategies:

- Develop a consistent format for engagement across the state – set expectations for when and how staff engage.
- Develop a shared language that is empowering, positive, honors different lived experiences.
- Plan ahead on due dates for projects that need community input and at the case level so all interested can be involved.
- Provide materials in formats most stakeholders have access to.
- Develop an agency-wide definition of “community” and “engagement” and train staff.
- Include foster parents on org chart.
- Invest in translation of basic information in alternative languages.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND CULTURE OF LEARNING

We envision a child welfare program that actively strives for ongoing improvement and evaluates the effectiveness of community engagement efforts by seeking feedback from community at the state, local, and family levels. We commit to using the feedback to respond to community needs.

Strategies:

- Develop a best-practices in community engagement body of knowledge and Include the Sanctuary Model, Trauma Informed Child Welfare, etc.
- Conduct the OEMS assessment with community and partners.
- Develop surveys for youth, biological families, foster families, Tribes and partners to measure engagement and track over time.

OUR COMMITMENT TO PRINCIPLES

Genuine community engagement is a complex issue that cuts across all sectors and beyond the walls of DHS. For this workgroup at this moment in time, the following measures are how we believe we would know things are better.

- Increased staff recruitment, especially from diverse communities
- Increased staff retention, especially staff from diverse communities
- Foster Parent recruitment, especially from diverse communities
- Foster Parent retention, especially from diverse communities
- Staff engagement (via survey)
- Foster Parent Satisfaction (via survey)
- Child and Youth Satisfaction (via survey)
- Increased number and diversity of stakeholders engaged in system improvement efforts at the state and local levels.
CONCLUSION

Members of the Enhancing Community Engagement Workgroup hope to work with DHS and Child Welfare to seek joint solutions to the current challenges that weaken true engagement at the state, local, and family levels. We see this proposal as the beginning of a collaborative, open dialogue. We have outlined strategies to move DHS towards attainment of the Principles of Community Engagement but recognize there are other options to achieve the same outcomes. Please tell us what those are. We also know that this work overlaps significantly with other committees, workgroups, and internal improvement efforts. We would like to understand those efforts and collaborate to strengthen joint solutions. We expect that outcomes of genuine community engagement will be far reaching and benefit everyone involved in child welfare, but most importantly, the children and youth for whom we owe our best selves and our best efforts.
Enhancing Community Engagement

2018
Know Your Why

Video Link
The Purpose

The purpose of this project is to enhance state and district level community engagement to work towards building trust and increasing responsiveness and collaboration between DHS child welfare, bio families, foster and adoptive families, relative caregivers, children, youth, Tribes, service providers, community partners, and historically marginalized populations.
We Promise...

• Unfinished business
• Change will only happen if you take action
• Discomfort

Resolutions NW
We envision a child welfare program that uses trauma informed practices to build relationships with parents, foster and adoptive families, relative caregivers, children, youth, Tribes, service providers, community partners, and historically marginalized populations.
Creating Space for Leadership

We envision a child welfare program that creates space for communities to lead by identifying their own system barriers as well as their strengths and developing their own solutions to problems.
Collaborating with Flexibility

We envision a child welfare program that collaborates by finding common ground, being flexible, and meeting people where they are. We promote a culture of participation and seek community driven solutions to system problems.
Communication with Accountability

We envision a child welfare program that is accountable to the community by listening, communicating consistently and frequently, and most importantly, following through and reporting back. We commit to capturing the range of views and ideas that come from genuine engagement and want participants to know their contributions will impact the direction and decisions of child welfare.
Preparation & Planning

We envision a child welfare program that plans ahead, has a clearly defined purpose, and meets the interests of/and is inclusive of all stakeholders. We are clear and open about the process of community engagement and provide accessible information that participants need to know to contribute in meaningful ways.
Continuous Improvement & Culture of Learning

We envision a child welfare program that actively strives for ongoing improvement and evaluates the effectiveness of community engagement efforts by seeking feedback from community at the state, local, and family levels. We commit to using the feedback to respond to community needs.
Equity & Inclusion

We envision a child welfare program that acknowledges responsibility for racial disproportionality and disparities that exist in child welfare. We strive for a future where one’s family history, race/ethnicity, culture, class, ability, gender identity, or sexual orientation does not predict their outcomes. We support efforts to institutionalize both equity and inclusion within the agencies practices, staffing, and outreach efforts.
Next Steps

- Endorse and incorporate the Principles of Community Engagement as developed by the workgroup
- Take action on the recommended steps outlined under each element of the Principles of Community Engagement
- Report back to workgroup with response to achieve outcomes and next steps to be taken within 30 days.
- Invest in capacity to support the continuation of Enhancing Community Engagement Workgroup
- After initial review and response, allow workgroup to conduct a 30-day stakeholder feedback period prior to finalization of the Principles of Community Engagement.
Our Why

Video Link
Our Why

Sandy Bumpus
Brooke Gray
Marissa Johnson
Jessica Lloyd-Rogers
Sahaan McKelvey
Melissa Sampson-Grier
Stephanie Simmons
Chelsea Bunch
Joshua Griggs
Christine Kamps
Elsana Marquee
Lisa McMahon
Ben Sand
Nicole Stapp

Bill Goodman
Pamela Heisler
Belinda Kjensrud
Josh Miller
Stacy Lake
Bobby Martin
Stacy Rivera
Derenda Schubert
Laura Wilson
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT:
Caregiver Support and Retention
Prepared by Caregiver Support and Development Workgroup,
STATEWIDE FOSTER CARE STEERING COMMITTEE
December 7, 2018

Workgroup Members

• Andrea Birchman, DHS Child Welfare
• Kathy Bracken, Relative Foster Parent
• Karen Brelje, Neurotherapeutic Pediatric Therapies, Foster/Adoptive Parent
• Rohanna Buchanan, Oregon Social Learning Center
• Greg Dalton, CASA of Coos County
• Ana Day, Oregon Community Programs
• Anthony Fox, KEEP Program, DHS Child Welfare
• Brooke Gray, Every Child Oregon, Foster Parent
• Marissa Johnson, Homes of Healing Coalition, Former Foster Parent
• Dana Leno, Grand Ronde Tribe
• John Linn, DHS Child Welfare
• Jessica Lloyd-Rogers, Oregon Foster Parent Association
• Roxanne Lovelace, Oregon Foster Parent Association
• Angelica Quintero, DHS Child Welfare
• Stephanie Simmons, DCHS Multnomah County, Foster Parent
• Lori Simpson, Catholic Community Services
• Liz Sumner, Oregon Foster Parent Association

DHS Staff Leaders: Rose Cokeley

Overview

The Caregiver Support and Development Workgroup formed in November 2017 with the objective of helping DHS Child Welfare with its internal strategy and practices to enhance support of Oregon foster parents and to increase foster parent retention. The group—a collective of foster parents, community organizations, leaders of color, and DHS staff—identified core areas of need in the effort to retain foster families and relative caregivers.

Over months of meetings, the Caregiver Support and Development Workgroup advised on the distribution of Emergency Board funds (HB 5201) and suggested additional communication strategies associated with the foster parent childcare subsidy. Additionally, the group identified the support areas needed for a foster family who is caring for children or youth in their home.

Recognizing that some support efforts exist in regions across the state, the Workgroup focused on current gaps geographically and in services across Oregon. Please see Appendix A for the map of current support programs across Oregon.
Recommendations

The Workgroup identified the following nine areas of support a foster parent needs from DHS Child Welfare to be successful and sustainable. These conditions were developed with the vision that foster parents are an active, equal, and respected part of the case team, and should be supported throughout their fostering journey.

Vision Conditions include:

1. **Communication**: Foster Parents receive clear and consistent communication from DHS
2. **Tangible Support of Basic Needs**: Foster Parents’ basic needs are met to care for child or youth
3. **Responsiveness**: Foster Parents receive timely response, especially in times of crisis
4. **Respect**: Foster Parents are respected as team members, as stated in the Foster Parent Bill of Rights
5. **Being Heard**: Foster Parents feel heard and listened to
6. **Trust**: Foster Parents feel trusted and can fully trust DHS
7. **Sharing Information**: Foster Parents are fully informed about child(ren) being placed in their home and their case plan
8. **Teach & Train**: Foster Parents receive evidence-based training and are engaged in co-training with other caregivers and DHS staff
9. **Celebration**: Successes are celebrated

From these nine identified priorities, the Workgroup decided to focus on two areas for this initial recommendation. *Both “Communication” and “Teach and Train” were identified as the most critical areas to support retention efforts.* Further recommendations around the other vision areas will be shared with the Foster Care Program Manager in future months.
PRIORITY 1: COMMUNICATION
Foster Parents often feel:
- Left waiting for answers/responses for too long (especially in urgent situations)
- Left out of the loop, or purposely omitted from communications
- Confused by receiving varied answers from different contacts
- Like their concerns are not being heard, or are being dismissed
- Shut down in their efforts to advocate for the needs of the children and youth in their care

Healthy and frequent communication is critical because:
1. Consistent and accurate communication helps prevent incorrect information being spread.
2. It builds trust and strengthens relationships between foster parents and DHS staff.
3. Being equally informed as a team member helps to alleviate the power differential that exists in the foster parent-DHS relationship.
4. Professional communication preserves relationships, sets expectations for interactions and behaviors, and confirms that foster parents are part of the team.
5. Healthy, accurate, timely and supportive communication DIRECTLY leads to retention. Foster Parents stay when they feel safe, included, informed and supported.

Recommendations for Priority 1
1. Before the rollout of new policies, standards, tangible items, etc. that directly affect foster parents, actively seek and consider input from the Caregiver Support and Development Workgroup and foster parents on the structure, impact, and potential consequences of new policy, standard, etc.
2. Prior to the roll-out/implementation of new policies, standards, etc., set a timeline and create a robust communication strategy that provides multiple avenues of communication and engages foster parents and community partners (generally three months before roll-out or implementation).
3. Establish a single point-of-contact for troubleshooting new policy questions and resource information at each branch.
4. Create a monthly Foster Care Newsletter (see “Additional Action Steps”).
5. Emphasize the importance of timely communication and collaboration regarding foster parents across DHS staff trainings.
6. Include foster parent speakers during CORE training to provide insight and perspective on common caseworker-foster parent issues (lack of timely communication, ill-planned child transitions, feelings of being excluded from case planning, etc.).
7. Increase marketing and outreach for the foster parent warm-line 211.
8. Provide uniform updates regarding policy changes to foster parents and DHS staff simultaneously, from a centralized source using multiple channels of communication such as email, newsletter, conference calls, etc.
9. Foster parents receive timely and consistent responses to questions and concerns.
10. Foster parents receive consistent support for advocacy efforts on behalf of the children and youth in their care.
PRIORITY 2: TEACH AND TRAIN

Foster Parents often feel:

- There is an overwhelming amount of material presented in Foundations training.
- Foundations training is too theoretical and lacks the real-world substance that foster parents with lived experience could provide. Prospective foster parents want to know what foster parenting will “really” be like.
- It is challenging to retain 100% of training material after Foundations training is complete.
- Information regarding policy and procedure is not shared equally between DHS workers and foster parents, nor is it shared in a timely manner.
- The Certification process and Foundations Training does not prepare foster parents for the real-world experience of fostering and all the situations that will likely arise.
- Foster parent training must be ongoing, relevant, child specific, real time and consistent.
- Training must create an environment of safety where foster parents are comfortable admitting any difficulties or frustrations with parenting and must include real time support for these frustrations or difficulties.
- Foster families (including birth family living in the home) should have access to emotional supports during their certification and after a child leaves their home, including but not limited to: grief and loss support.

Effective, thorough, and ongoing teaching and training is critical because:

- Intentional, consistent training around policy, protocol, and expectations creates knowledgeable, empowered foster parents.
- When foster parents and DHS are not equally informed on policy, procedure, or other relevant information, it causes confusion, misinformation, and creates dissonance.
- The emotional challenging and complex nature of fostering cannot be taught in a classroom setting without context.
- Foster families will be retained longer if they are supported on an ongoing basis.
- Child outcomes will improve with effective and ongoing parent training.
- There will be a direct positive impact on the recruitment and retention of foster families.

Four primary gaps currently exist in training:

1. Consistent communication in DHS Staff training and Foundations training around foster parents’ role as advocates.
2. Real-life context and interaction with other foster parents during training and after certification.
3. Shared learning environment between DHS staff and foster parents.
4. An evaluation baseline for improvements made in training that correlates to the preparation and retention of foster families, and regular audits for evaluation of training.

Recommendation for Priority 2

1. Utilize current foster parents—especially relative caregivers and caregivers from diverse communities and communities of color—to teach portions of training and share real-life context and application for principles.
2. Further support peer-to-peer mentorship programs.
3. Provide co-training for foster parents and DHS workers to mitigate the power differential, create camaraderie, ensure uniform dissemination of information and improve overall communication.
4. Agency to provide ongoing training and therapeutic support services, including the topics of grief and loss, attachment, trauma, and self-care to all foster families. In addition to encouraging retention, following these recommendations will help create and enable safe, secure, and supported foster parents which will help ensure safe, secure, and supported children and youth in care.

**Additional Action Steps**

In addition to the recommendations reflected for the two priority areas, the Workgroup recommends the following action steps in response to this proposal:

1) **Foster Care Program Manager to respond to this formal proposal within 60 days with communication on planned implementation and/or alternate suggestable steps with accompanied explanation.**

2) **The Caregiver Support & Retention Workgroup continues to meet monthly.**

   Noting that this is the only DHS workgroup DIRECTLY related to foster parent retention, we request to continue meeting monthly to further develop recommendations and action steps on the other identified support needs areas, and to keep recommendations and action steps reflected in this proposal moving forward.

3) **Statewide Foster Care Steering Committee meets bi-monthly**

   Believing that actions are the strongest demonstration of the stated commitment to foster parent retention, members of our Workgroup request more frequent meetings of the Statewide Foster Care Steering Committee. Every other month would be ideal, but quarterly meetings would be sufficient, to further support the efforts of this and other Workgroups.

   With increased opportunities to make recommendations and propose action steps, this Workgroup would be able to address foster care providers’ identified areas of support and needs simultaneously and create solutions that can be implemented more quickly.

4) **The creation, development & distribution of an Oregon Foster Care Monthly Newsletter.**

   To be co-developed with the support and collaboration of this Caregiver Support and Retention Workgroup, we request that a regular monthly newsletter be created and sent to all DHS employees and foster care providers across the state of Oregon.

   The goals for this newsletter are to:
   1. Create a regular channel of communication to share what is currently being done to better the foster care system;
   2. Provide shared information, education, policy updates and changes;
   3. Create a stronger sense of unity between DHS and foster providers; and
4. Reinforce motivation and collaborative successes by sharing inspirational stories from within the Oregon Foster Care.

Implementing this newsletter will help foster parents to become a valued and integral part of the Care Provider Team, worthy of equal information sharing. It will also reduce the spread of misinformation and will build trust between foster providers and DHS.

This newsletter should include a brief communication from the leadership of Child Welfare (Director of DHS Child Welfare, Deputy Director of Child Welfare, or the Foster Care Program Manager), with relevant and important plans, developments, updates, and highlights/success stories. This newsletter should include pieces of communication that address the following areas as needed: policy and procedure, legislative proposals and actions, information regarding pilot programs and their progress across Oregon, resources for assistance or education, information regarding programs as they are implemented (i.e.: child care stipend, respite care, foster parent mentor programs, training opportunities), case-studies and FAQ’s about foster care, and highlights/good news/success stories from foster care.

A regularly published newsletter will help foster parents develop the expectation of routine communication and help eliminate uneven and inaccurate information.

This newsletter should be available to be received via e-mail, accessible to download for print online, and printed at each local branch for the Foster Parent waiting rooms and distributed to Certifiers to hand out during check-in visits.

5) The Workgroup to receive every-other-month reporting—to follow impact of Workgroup work and DHS retention efforts—with the following data points for each county in Oregon: ***

- Total number of Foster Homes (point in time)
  - General Applicant
  - Child-Specific
- New Foster Homes, broken down by
  - General Applicant
  - Child-Specific
  - Evaluation of +/- from previous month
- Closed Foster Homes, broken down by
  - Adoption
  - Transition from general applicant to child specific home
  - Transition from child specific to general foster home
  - Children aging out of foster care
  - Exit the system (voluntary or involuntary)
  - Temporary Hold (allegation or foster parent break)
- How many foster parents have exited certification during the bi-monthly time period of report (voluntary and involuntary)
- Total number of foster parents who have exited certification per year (voluntary and involuntary)
• Number of Out-of-Home-Care Assessments, statewide or by district (*recognizing confidentiality is critical, this number is simply to help provide context for strain on foster families and inactive homes*)
  o # of founded
  o # of unfounded
  o # unable to determine or ‘undetermined’
• Number of children in care by county (point-in-time)
  o # of children (ages 0-18) in general and child specific foster care
  o # of young adults in care, with placement type category
• Foundations Training
  o # of participants who have completed Foundations Training across the state
  o # of persons certified upon completion of Foundations Training across the state

***The Workgroup requests to meet with the Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics, and Implementation (ORRAI) regarding what data is being tracked currently, what information ORRAI believes would be helpful for this workgroup, and any other data that can be shared with this workgroup.***
Caregiver Support & Development Sub-Committee

Foster Parent Retention & Support

UNIFIED CHILD & YOUTH SAFETY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

DECEMBER 18, 2018
Foster Home Numbers Over Time

- Total Homes
- Regular Homes
- Child Specific Homes

Homes

Total Open Certified Foster Homes as of 10/30/18: 4,110

Source: Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics, and Implementation | 2017
Emergency Board Funding Request:

In February 2018, this steering committee workgroup requested funding from the Emergency Board for the following retention & support needs:

- Respite Care financial assistance for foster parents & relative caregivers
- Foster parent peer mentoring programs
- Flexible funding for Emergency Placements - to support relative care providers during emergency certification

Results:
The Emergency Board granted $120,000 for System of Care expenses, and $300,000 for respite care reimbursements for foster and relative caregivers (funded through an unrelated source) to be issued at a rate of $55 per day, up to 3 days per month.

- Support group advised implementation of Child Care Reimbursement & communication strategy
- Requested & received policy change - no deadline to apply for reimbursement starting May 1, 2018, to give time for info to be communicated
- Development of Vision for Conditions & Prioritization
- Extension of KEEP pilot program

Source: Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics, and Implementation | Oct. 2018
These conditions were developed with the vision that Foster Care Providers are an active, equal, & respected part of the case team, & should be supported throughout their fostering experience.
Vision for Conditions - Foster Parent Support

What do Foster Parents need to feel supported?

1 - Clear & Consistent Communication
2 - Tangible Support of Basic Needs
3 - Responsiveness from Team Members
4 - Respected as a Team Member
5 - To be heard / feel listened to
6 - Trust - To feel trusted & feel able to trust
7 - Shared Information - to be equally informed
8 - Teaching & Training
9 - Celebrate Successes
Priority 1 – COMMUNICATION

Foster Parents often feel...

- Left waiting for answers/responses for too long (especially in urgent situations)
- Left out of the loop, or purposefully omitted from communications
- Confused by receiving varied answers from different contacts
- Like their concerns are not being heard, or are being dismissed

CRITICAL BECAUSE...

- Consistent & accurate communication helps prevent incorrect information being spread, & helps to build trust
- Being equally informed as a team member helps to alleviate the power differential in the Foster Parent – DHS relationship
- Professional communication preserves relationships, sets expectations for interactions & behaviors, & confirms that Foster Parents are part of the Team

“Ultimately it has to do with a relationship between DHS and Foster Parents. And part of that is establishing guidelines and best practices so that we can work together rather than in opposition of each other.”

- Anonymous Foster Parent
Communication: Case Example

Child Care Reimbursement Program Roll-Out

Implementation

February 2018 - Request for funding Child Care Reimbursement Program was granted

Roll-out included 3 webinars & 1 email, produced to communicate the reimbursement program to DHS staff

CHALLENGES

- No state-wide communication on Child Care Reimbursement program was sent to the whole Foster Care Community (DHS & Foster Care Providers)
- Unclear expectations of timeline for communicating information
- DHS workers were expected to be the primary channel of communication to Foster Care Providers - this is inadequate & adds an additional burden to DHS caseworkers & certifiers
- Original plan for roll-out was not thorough enough to spread awareness of the program to all members of the Foster Care Community in a timely manner
Sub-Committee Recommendations:

- **Set Timelines**
  Even tentatively, to keep communications on-track

- **Conference Calls & Webinars**
  For all DHS staff & Foster Care Providers

- **Single Point of Contact**
  For troubleshooting & assistance at each branch
Foster Parents often feel...

- There is an overwhelming amount of material in Foundations classes, and not enough time to cover it

- Information regarding policy & procedure is not shared equally between DHS workers & Foster Parents

- Certification does not prepare Foster Parents for the real-world experience of fostering

CRITICAL BECAUSE...

- Intentional, consistent training around policy, protocol, & expectations creates knowledgable, empowered Foster Parents

- When Foster Parents and DHS are not equally informed on policy, procedure, or other relevant information, it can create confusion, spread misinformation, and create a feeling of dissonance

- Foundations Training does not offer the firsthand learning that would help prepare Foster Parents for the emotional, real-world experience of fostering

“We were Emergency Certified, and Foundations Training wasn’t cutting it. We needed immediate, in-home training from someone who had been there before.”

- Anonymous Relative Caregiver
Teaching & Training: Case Examples

Gaps in Education

Foster Parents’ Role as Advocates

Foundations Training teaches Foster Parents to advocate on behalf of the children in their care.

Foster Parents feel DHS minimizes this role - there is a perceived attitude of “I’m the expert, you’re just a Foster Parent.”

Training Lacks Real-Life Context

For most Foundations Training courses, Foster Parents are lucky to hear from experienced caregivers or former Foster Children for an hour.

Too much “book” aspect of training, not enough real-life context. Foster Parents do not feel prepared for the reality of caregiving by Foundations Training.

CHALLENGES

Lack of co-training between DHS & Foster Parents

Unclear expectations of Foster Parent’s role as child’s advocate

Foster Parents don’t have consistent interaction with current/experienced Foster Providers

There is no channel for updating Foster Parents & DHS on policy & information together
Sub-Committee Recommendations:

1. **Utilize Current Foster Parents**
   - Focusing on diverse communities, & gearing training programs to learning real-life context

2. **Support Development of Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Programs**

3. **Co-Training with Foster Care Providers & DHS Workers**

4. **Equally Shared Information**
   - DHS & Foster Care Providers should receive information on policy/law at the same time, from the same source
Workgroup Requesting to make a Formal Proposal to be responded to by Program Manager within 60 days, & include the following:

- Workgroup continues to meet monthly to develop formal report
- Statewide Foster Care Steering Team meets at least every other month
- Regular Newsletter to complete Foster Care Community (DHS & Foster Care Providers) to increase frequency & expectation of communication - Co-developed with workgroup