

# Kinship and Foster Care Workgroup

12/4/2019

## Agenda

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Purpose
- Group Format
- Communication Strategies
- Open Discussion
- Actions

## Welcome!

- Key Info
    - Minutes + info will be on the website
    - Co-Leads:
      - Tina Jefferson and Randi Rubin Rodriguez
- Tina: *"This is not an initiative. This is a change...this is what I've wanted to do since I've started...and the federal government is supporting us."*

## Purpose: Family First Overview

- ~~FFPSA~~ → Family First
  - Language matters and we want to emphasize that this is not just legislation; it is a shift in our child welfare system.
  - Focusing on the *family* not just the child
  - In keeping with this idea, someone brought up the terminology "termination of parental rights" and wanted to know if we could also talk about whether it is time to rethink that phrase. Especially considering the trust issues certain communities have with the department, the stigma of that phrase, and our ultimate goal of partnership.
- What is Family First?
  - Bipartisan Bill passed in Feb 2018
  - Changes where funding goes

- Previously we received reimbursements on the back end, but now this is being shifted towards reimbursements for a prevention plan that will take a more upstream approach
  - We are not just looking at this as a change in funding—it is a rethinking of the system on behalf of families and kids.
    - Paradigm shift: Not just looking at the child welfare agency (DCF) but at the child welfare *system* as a whole.
    - How do we help everyone to see that they are *all* part of the system and all responsible for child welfare?
  - Focuses on funding Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)
    - Note—We understand that not all the programs we fund are EBPs (kinship navigator tools, for example), but they are clearly beneficial to our kids. What we want to do is look at our full service array and evaluate our options. We will fund some EBPs with Family First money but this DOES NOT MEAN we will stop funding non-EBPs. We will not know yet if programs will be cut or changed; this is something that we will be looking at over the next few months. We are also looking at if the feds have any sort of process to get programs approved (if there is a way for programs to become Evidence-Based). We will be looking at different streams of funding besides Family First as well. At this point, we are reevaluating everything, and nothing is off the table. Furthermore, plans can change and few concrete decisions have been made.
- In CT
  - We started this work already in our efforts to support kinship care and reduce congregate care usage
  - Goal is to have a prevention plan decided by April 2020 and start implementation in October 2020
  - This will be done through the work of subgroups which will each tackle portions of the prevention plan
    - Candidacy

- Programs
- Fiscal
- Community Partnerships/Family and Youth Outreach
- **Kinship and Foster Care**

**Purpose: This Group's Goal**

- **Deliverable:** Identify supportive services for kinship caregivers
  - Those in DCF care and beyond (e.g. post-permanency, reunified youth, youth w/ kin through probate court, etc.)
  - What do you need to support those in kinship care and those giving care to kin?

**Who is missing from the table?**

- Families (Beresford will be helping with this)
  - Including families with multiple struggles
- Adoption Assistance Program
- Children's Probate Court
  - Social workers
  - Probate court reps
  - Judges (possibly including retired judges)
- Local schools
  - DOE surrogate program in particular
- Youth (especially those who have grown up in the system)
  - Note—logistically, it may be hard to get youth voices to these meetings (due to school, etc) but we will make an effort to reach out to youth groups (such as YAB) and encourage members to make efforts outside of the group to engage with youth voices on their own schedule. This may be a case in which we need to go to them rather than expecting them to come to us.
- Relative families
- 0-3 programs
- Infant mental health leaders
- Family care rep (for children in custody battles)

- School-based programs
- Government workers
  - Elected officials (legislators, mayors of large cities)
  - Municipal departments
  - Departments—DSS, DMHAS, DAS, DOH in particular
    - We should look at how to share data on who is using/in need of services
    - Might be able to get aggregate data but perhaps not individualized due to privacy concerns
- Clinical staff
- Attorneys in appellate cases (re: giving care back to previous caregivers/family members)
- EDT Program

## **Logistics**

- Relatively short time frame (now-March)
- Possible locations:
  - The Connection (Middletown)
  - Children’s Center of Hamden
  - Beacon Health Options
- Possible format
  - Splitting into breakout groups every meeting, but still being in the same room. This would help delegate responsibilities among a large group while making sure it does not splinter into difficult to manage factions.
    - Policy changes, kinship training, and kinship support were brought up as possible groupings. Decisions as to who would be in what group would be made at the 12/20 meeting.
- Meeting dates
  - December 20<sup>th</sup>: 10 am – 12 pm (could decide to extend this meeting)
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of every month starting in January
    - 10 am – 12 pm
    - Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>

- Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>
- March 13<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>
- April 10<sup>th</sup> (perhaps)
- Outlook invite will be sent soon

### **What resources do you need?**

- Researcher in the field (in CT) to assist in planning
  - John Laczeck (spelling?) was brought up as an option
  - Derrick Gordan (Ph.D at UConn) also brought up
  - Either find someone in the field or appoint someone in the group to look at what research would be useful to bring back to the group
- 1-2 brief on Family First (one is available on the website from Casey)
- Relinquishment/TPR info
  - Carol Cruz—Relinquished child
- Presentations for 12/20
  - Model licensing standards
  - CT's current programs and service array
    - More info on reunification efforts
    - Info on efforts to bridge the gap between bio and foster parents (viewing foster parents as “coaches” to bio parents)
- DHDI rep who can perhaps write about the planning process (doing this throughout the process rather than trying to write about it afterwards)

### **Key Takeaways**

- This group is passionate and values learning throughout this process
- This planning phase is an opportunity to create meaningful change—this is not just an initiative.
- Kids belong with their families