

Coos County Foster Care Group Meeting #1 – January 5, 2009 Salem, Oregon

Agenda for Today's Meeting:

The group decided on the follow times and items to discuss for the afternoon.

1:10 Setting up the conversation

- Overall timeline,
- Who's at the table
- Goals
- Current Initiatives
- Sources in Coos

2:10 Prioritize Goals

3:00 Begin action steps

4:15 Closing

- Wrap-up
- What's unfinished
- Homework

Timeline for this Project:

The group wanted to set dates as soon as possible to try to accommodate the Judge and Legislator visits

- Jan 30th or 31st will be the second meeting of this group and first in Coos Bay. Others will be invited to attend this meeting
- March 13th will be the final meeting
- March 15th is the deadline set by the Commission and DHS to have the meetings complete, action items delineated, individuals and group assigned to tasks and evaluation metrics established.

Who would be Good to have Involved:

The group talked about who in Coos might be interested and should possibly sit at the table when convening the meetings in Coos Bay.

1. Judge Stone (handles all Juvenile Court Cases) and/or Judge Baron (years of experience)
2. Mental Health – Ginger Swan
3. Legislators – Rep. Kregar – very active in child welfare legislation
4. Private Industry
5. Service Organizations
6. Foster Care Association – Nancy Lee will email
7. Religious/Faith community representation. There are the “usuals” in this group who always participate. The group wants to consider who might be someone new and different.
8. Teens, probably at least two so they can support each other. Someone from this group with check with the ILP program.
9. CRB
10. CASA
11. SCRC,
12. Oregon Youth Authority
13. YA, - Gary and/or Alice (children at alternate school)
14. Relatives caring for kids – Grandparents caring for children
15. Attorneys who represent children
16. Parents

17. Kathy Barber – parenting education (Even Start)
18. Case worker
19. Headstart
20. Zero To Three team (this could be Beth, a caseworker) a.k.a. ZTT
21. Yvonne will link with other tribes. And both tribes want to be represented. So add Confederated Tribes of Coos,
22. Public Health
23. Law Enforcement
24. Laurie Wright – parole and probation.
25. Housing (the Zero to Three team is working on this)

Note – This is obviously a large list. Let's consider when we talk next, who are the most prudent ones that can actually come to the table with the ability to help with action items. The rest we can keep informed by emails, newsletter, etc.

Current Initiatives:

The group then decided it would be good to make sure we all are aware of all the initiatives that are currently out there that may affect this work.

Oregon

- 2010 IV-E Waiver
- LEAN project, lead by LEAN leaders
- Program Improvement Plan
- Statewide Wraparound
- Oregon Safety Model
- Citizen Review Board reform... "Finding-based reviews"
- Foster Care Rate Reform
- Healthy Start
- Family Support and Connections
- Children's Mental Health Systems Change Initiative

Coos

- Zero to Three (ZTT)
- Peace Giving Court (Tribes)
- Relative Placement projects funded by IV-E
 - Family Dynamics Counseling
 - Relative Search
 - Tribal IV-E Waiver
- Coos Child Welfare Advisory Board
- Community Trainings by the Commission on Child Abuse Prevention and intervention
- Healthy Start
- Family Support and Connections
- Family Court Concept in Juvenile Court
- Juvenile Court Improvement Project
- Child voice in permanency hearings if they wish to be heard.
- CASA – one for every child
- Commission Plan for the next six years ... Coos

Note: Let's sort out which will have the most impact on helping this project safely reduce the number of children in Foster Care. I'm thinking there may only be a few that have direct affect on the final action items and that this group can realistically address.

Data:

The group then reviewed the most current data supplied by DHS. We had a DHS data expert, Maria, in the room to answer any questions the group had.

1. How are Native Americans defined?

- a. People self identify to the case manager and it was those statistics that were used.
 - b. Used the 'self-identified' field
 - c. Action Item: train the professionals how to better help people identify their ethnicity so it gets correctly recorded.
2. Unknowns - Coos is down to 14.6% and that number still seemed high to the group.
 - a. Action Item: Need training for staff on how to have the conversation about racial or ethnic identity. This number should be able to be significantly reduced once staff is trained to ask the question(s) and get a more appropriate answer.
 - b. Action Item: - Work with the families to get more accurate self-identifications
 - c. Action Item: Ask the DHS Central Office to run new statistics.
3. 329 children in care on 9-30-07 - The group agreed that this could not be true. This number actually represents the mean number of children in care at least one day during Federal fiscal year ending 9/30/07. It is important to remember that there are all kinds of out-of-home care and this is not reflected in the data. This data does not count substitute care through hospitalization unless s/he was a dependent child.
4. Page 3 - rate of placement into care. The question was asked if it is true that the rate of placement of children in care is significantly higher than the state average? The data expert, Maria responded with a yes and explained this is a consistent pattern for Coos. Maria explained that she did look to make sure that this wasn't the artifact of one or two large sibling groups taken into care.
5. Page 6 - percent of children with relatives as first placement. Group members stated that Coos has really worked on practice in this area.
 - a. Action Item: Might want to explore how people around the state are dealing with assessing and certifying the relative placement.
 - b. Action Item: Might be a good place to go with the QSR (Quality Safety Review). Maria and NancyLee will follow up at break.
6. Page 7 - is it really true that 2.1% of the kids in care were African American? But the year before, only .8%? Maria responded, yes. The group agreed that there are so few African American families in Coos County, that one large family coming into care would make a big difference.
7. Multiple ethnicities - Maria *thinks* DHS used multiple ethnicities in the data analysis and she will check with Anna Cox. The group discussed the challenges of tracking multi-ethnicities because TANF regulations require one ethnicity be identified.
8. State-wide goals - Maria emphasized the Casey goals are state-wide. It may not be possible to reach a Coos-specific benchmarks, particularly around disproportionality and disparity that are the same as Casey's state-wide. **Note**: DHS is wanting each county to create action items for each of the goals, so we will need to discuss this more and create Coos-based, realistic goals. Coos may need to look at the possibility of a disparity issue rather than a disproportionality issue and what might be goals.

Current Resources:

The group developed a "list" of current resources that may have an impact on the goals and action items yet to be created and solidified. Some of the people with these agencies may need to be involved in the goal and action item discussions. And others will be informed of the goals and action items.

- Zero to Three
- Headstart
- Healthy Start
- Trainings from the CCF
- Family Support and Connections
- Early Childhood Education Committee
- SCRC
- Family Center
- Tribal Family Support programs
- Community Action Agency (includes emergency housing)

- Women's Resource Center.
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Salvation Army
- Service Clubs
- Faith Based
- County Government
- Bay Area Hospitals (3) – trainings and others
- Child Advocacy Center
- Children's In-home Intensive Services (part of Mental Health)
- Family Court
- Boys and Girls Club
- Scouting
- Bay Area First Step
- AA
- NA

Prioritize Goals:

Each group member individually prioritized the six pre-determined DHS goals. The group then discussed the goals and reached the following conclusion for the priority order.

1. Increase relative placements.
2. Reduce those entering care
3. Reduce recurrence of abuse with particular attention to those returning home
4. Increase the number of exits
5. Reduce disproportionality

Discussion on Goals:

The group then began the discussion on specific actions and/or strategies to address each goal. We were cut short in the discussion by 45 minutes so the group only strategized some solutions for the first goal.

1. Increase Relative Placements.
 - Currently (FFY '07) Coos is at 20% in kin
 - The current Waiver Plan goal is to have 20 kids with families by June 2009. To date there have only been found 4 families found.
 - The group talked about how this would need to look in terms of a benchmark and no specifics were determined, at this time.
 - Strategies:
 1. Use the IV-E Waiver funded projects regarding family dynamics
 2. Use the IV-E Waiver funded projects regarding relative search. Currently there is one FTE allocated to this work and it has not been very successful. Go back and look at all the things this person is doing and see if there is a way to support her success.
 3. Seek technical assistance from Casey on how to make this successful.
 4. Identify barriers (example: need financial support, day care, certification barriers addressed)
 5. Ask Casey whether there is going to be any action at the federal level to change the certification requirement in IV-E around licensing.
 6. Definition change to include kith and kin placements.
 7. Consider a state policy change that face-to-face contact, which might include video conferencing.

Next Steps

1. Video or teleconference on Friday, January 9th – 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
 - a. Agenda:
2. Megara will edit Katharine's notes and send out to the group by Wednesday evening.
3. Confirm the dates of the next two Coos meetings as soon as possible

4. These unedited notes will be sent to DHS