



Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Committee/Task Force:	Child Services Oversight Committee		
Date of Meeting: (MM/DD/YYYY)	12/18/2020	Time:	9:00AM
Minutes Prepared By:	Andrea Zimmerman	Location:	Virtual - Zoom
1. Meeting Objective(s)			
Approval of minutes from the July 2020 meeting; introductions of members; DCS update; DCS Ombudsman Bureau Introduction; IARCA update; public comment; committee member discussions.			
2. Standing Members			
Name	Organization	In Attendance (X indicates present)	
Rep. Edward Clere (Co-Chair)	Indiana General Assembly	X	
Rep. Carolyn Jackson	Indiana General Assembly	X	
Leslie Dunn	Indiana CASA/GAL	X	
Hon. Dana Kenworthy	Grant Superior Court	X	
Sean McCrindle	Bashor Children's Home	X	
Sen. Jon Ford	Indiana General Assembly	X	
Michael Moore	Indiana Public Defender Council	X	
Sen. Frank Mrvan	Indiana General Assembly		
Jim Oliver	Prosecuting Attorneys Council	X	
Jeff Wittman	Department of Education	X	
Director Terry Stigdon	Department of Child Services	X	
3. Staff/Guests			
Name	Organization		
Terry Stigdon	Director, DCS		
Shoshanna Everhart	Director, DCS Ombudsman Bureau		
Chris Daley	Executive Director, IARCA		
Leslie Dunn	Director, CASA		
William Young	Legislative Director, DCS		
Rep. Dale DeVon	Chair, CISC; Indiana House of Representatives, Indiana General Assembly		
Sen. Ronald Grooms	Indiana State Senate, Indiana General Assembly		
4. Updates/Old Business			
Topic	Main Points	Recommendations/Decisions	
Approval of minutes from previous meeting	No questions, comments, or revisions	Motion to approve Sean McCrindle Seconded by Director Stigdon Motion approved unanimously	
5. New Business/Presentations			
Topic	Main Points	Recommendations/Decisions	
Welcome and Introductions	Rep. Clere welcomed all to the virtual meeting.	N/A	

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DCS Update	<p>The DCS updated their mission, vision and value statements. These updates came from feedback gained by stakeholders and families involved with the agency. Accomplishments of 2020 include service, quality, and people. These include the creation of the Racial Justice, Equity, and Inclusion Council, Intake/Assessment Process improvements, and adjustments made due to COVID-19. The DCS has also updated its Foster Care Portal, reviewed its practice model, and obtained a SIF Grant in partnership with IU. DCS has also improved its equity services, improved staff retention through the 12/12/13 caseload, and invested in the employee workplace experience. Due to this, Invest has been able to roll out two years sooner. The Safe System Improvement team was able to role out the program statewide which assists with child maltreatment and fatalities. Accomplishments such as these have allowed for faster, more quality services. Additionally, CARES Act Funding has been utilized to aid DCS operations. The Practice Model was relaunched post-CWG assessment to ensure practice fidelity. As of November the TPR to adoption time is 309 days, which is under the 365 day goal. Director Stigdon would like to bolster the shared parent methods so foster families, kin, and parents can work together to provide the best care for children. This continues to have effort through the Shared Parent Advisory Board. A foster parent survey was conducted in July, which received great feedback at 41 percent response rate, but room for improvement remains. Employee turnover has reduced from 27 percent to 17 percent. For the first time ever, DCS has met its caseload requirements outlined in statute (IC 31-25-2-5). This is a huge accomplishment and aids in all aspects of DCS operations. For 2022-2023, DCS has four goals. The Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline reports received during each year has decreased. This could be due to less educator and law enforcement interaction with children due to the pandemic. DCS continues to have a high rate of screenings for assessments. Approximately 8 percent of screenings turn into open cases. Out of home placements continue to decrease. Adoptions have increased by 20 percent from 2018 to 2019, but have dropped slightly in 2020 due to the pandemic. DCS has almost 5K employees in 2020. The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) was adopted in 2018, which makes federal resources available for mental health, substance abuse, and parenting classes. The goal is to keep children safe at home, next with kin, if necessary with foster families, and lastly a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP). QRTPs have several restrictions and program necessities outlined by the FFPSA.</p>	<p>Rep. Clere asked for clarification on the ultimate target for DCS employee turnover. Director Stigdon stated that the goal is 15 percent which would make Indiana the best in the nation. Currently, Indiana is in the top tier, but lower turnover helps with child care. To get from 17-18 percent to 15 will be aided by the Employee Experience Value Care system.</p> <p>Mr. Moore, Hon. Kenworthy, and Mr. McCrindle all commended Director Stigdon for the open and easy collaboration DCS has provided with their entities and the roll out of the FFPSA.</p> <p>Mr. Moore discussed concerns with drug testing labs which varies by collection method and type. There are investigations into Redwood, and attorneys have concerns about their validity. He recommended DCS to use an outside vendor to audit the drug testing results of Redwood Toxicology Laboratory and the reevaluation of their contract. Director Stigdon mentioned that DCS is in the middle of the RFP process, but stated she would delegate looking into this to her staff. Mr. Moore would like attorneys to reject the test and requested live testimony.</p>	
DCS Ombudsman Introduction	<p>Shoshanna Everhart is the new DCS Ombudsman, as of September 2020. This is her 40th year in social work in both the public and private sectors. She started her career in CPS and has worked her way up in various positions. She has also worked as adjunct faculty, in hospitals, home-based care, and with supervising others. She is hoping this will be the pinnacle of her career. She noted she is looking forward to working at DCS and has enjoyed it thus far.</p>		

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IARCA Update	<p>Mr. Daley provided an update on IACRA's work, especially in the light of COVID-19. Much of the staff has given above and beyond to the children and families they serve. Services have not been interrupted and families hve continued to work on their goals. IARCA does have a need for additional funding. Thankfully, some funding has been secured through DCS and the CARES Act. This funding will aid in the continuation of services. IARCA had their annual regional meeting, which resulted in staff voicing their exhaustion with the pandemic and the changes to care. This is especially evident with the home-based careworkers who are at a significant risk for COVID-19, even in light of PPE and quarantines. Some residential agencies are experiencing issues with keeping shifts fully staffed. This is due to quarantine requirements and COVID-19 illnesses. They are able to maintain the children being served, but are struggling to welcome any additional youth. The ISDH has been responsive in how to handle these issues and updates on vaccines. Virtual services have been utilized in order to maintain additional services for families and staff. IARCA had an Outcomes 2020 project to update the juvenile justice practices and services. This encompassed data collection on services and service results. This resulted in the updating of assessment tools and placements with evidence-based best practices. IARCA has launched a tri-agency working group for foster care improvements, such as shared parenting. The IARCA Learning Institute has launched professional development opportunities to agencies to further the profession. This has fostered a partnership with IU's O'Neill School. There will be continued efforts to work with kinship caregivers as DCS and providers expand their kinship navigation efforts. Mr. Daley mentioned his appreciation of Director Stigdon and the Governor for their financial efforts to improve billing practices. He would like outside parties further involved in these conversations. Mr. Daley mentioned that a cultural shift is occuring to ensure that negative emotions and stigma are not projected onto parents and families who require assistance.</p>	Rep. Clere asked for clarification on the cultural viewpoint shift. Mr. Daley stated that it is a positive move for agencies to overcome this stidma to better serve children. Reducing these negative connotations help with collaboration and long term success with families. Ms. Dunn added that this has been a huge cultural shift over the years, even for agencies. Director Stigdon mentioned that this is historical across the country. Director Stigdon called on the Indiana General Assembly for removing statutes that convey these negative attitudes and practices.	
CASA Update	<p>Ms. Dunn stated that the CASA, Child Advocates in Indianapolis, is offering a conference on Undoing Racism, which is nationally recognized. She encouraged committee attendance. This is powerful and important content sponsored by grant funding. CASA recently partnered with DCS on iPath to reduce human trafficking. This will help with getting resources and understanding to the community. CASA has been able to maintain volunteer numbers and conduct trainings virtually. Many CASA volunteers are 50+ years old, and are high risk for COVID-19; however they remain extremely committed to seeing and aiding children safely through virtual and social distanced meetings. COVID-19 has enhanced communications between DCS and the Courts.</p>	Hon. Kenworthy mentioned that she swore in a new CASA volunteer who was excited to volunteer once he turned the age minimum.	
Public Comment	None		
Committee Discussion	<p>Mr. McCrindle commented that DCS and all community groups have done well at getting objectives done, especially in our committee and in strategic planning. He noted the cultural shift in views on families needed care. He complemented older youth who have aged out of care who provide their feedback and help DCS and groups to improve services that are provided.</p> <p>Mr. Moore mentioned that there is a FFPSA Joint Training Event found here.</p> <p>Director Stigdon shared a story to humanize the work of DCS. She commented on how little actions can instill hope.</p> <p>Mr. Wittman commended the increased transparency and collaboration conducted by DCS with DOE and other agencies.</p>		

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6. Action Items (Include recommendations/queries for Executive Committee)			
Action		Responsibility	Due Date
Share the DCS presentation with committee members		Director Stigdon/Julie Whitman	ASAP
7. Adjournment			
Action			Time
Rep. Clere ended the meeting.			10:51AM
8. Next Meeting			
Date: (MM/DD/YYYY)	TBD	Time:	
Location:			
Topics/Objective(s):			