

**Child Welfare Improvement Committee
Indiana Court Improvement Program**

Minutes

Friday, August 1, 2014

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

1. Members Present. Heather Mollo (chair), Christina Morrison, Cathy Graham, Leslie Dunn, Lisa Rich.
2. Guests Present. Tamara Wilson, Deputy General Counsel, Department of Child Services; Reba James, Deputy Director, Permanency and Practice Support, Department of Child Services.
3. Staff Present. Mike Commons, Angela Reid-Brown.
4. Approval of minutes. The minutes from the March 7, 2014 meeting were approved.
5. Member Updates. Christina Morrison provided an update on the Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association (IFCCA). IFCAA is a nonprofit membership organization for foster care and adoptive parents, public and private agencies and other professionals who work with children across Indiana. The organization functions as an ambassador to help link the public to government agencies. In the past, IFCAA has worked in partnership with the Department of Child Services (DCS) to provide independent living training and for foster care recruitment. She raised a concern that foster parents are not consistently being invited to participate in case planning for children in their care, as required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).
6. DCS Presentations.

Tamara Wilson, Deputy General Counsel. Ms. Wilson reviewed the DCS policies and procedures for negotiating adoption assistance payments (DCS Child Welfare Policy Manual, Chapter 10, Section 17). Assistance payments are meant to subsidize the child's special needs, as there is a presumption that the parent can and should cover the child's ordinary needs. DCS uses a "cost-based" approach to negotiating assistance payment. Factors considered when negotiating payments include the special needs of the child, the circumstances of the family, resources available to the family to provide for the needs of the child, and any other relevant facts about the child or family. Adoptive parents must submit documentation demonstrating the need for the subsidy for state and federal audit purposes. Adoptive parents are allowed to request a modification of the assistance payments once per year.

Reba James, Deputy Director, Permanency & Practice Support. Ms. James provided an overview of the DCS Permanency Roundtable (PRT) process. A PRT is an internal

professional case consultation. The PRT goals are 1) to develop an action plan that will expedite legal permanency for the child, 2) stimulate thinking and learning about pathways to permanency for children, and 3) identify and address systemic barriers to permanency. The organizational goals of PRTs are to identify and address barriers to permanency that might be changed through professional development, policy change, resource development, and/or engagement of system partners. Child outcomes include legal permanency, improved legal permanency status, reduced level of restrictiveness of the living situation, and to increase the number of meaningful connections. Organizational outcomes include relentless pursuit of permanency for all children, “busting” systemic barriers, developing master practitioners, and strengthening systems integration and community involvement.

DCS began piloting PRTs in May 2011 in seven regions. The program was rolled out statewide as of June 28, 2012. As of June 30, 2014, DCS has completed 617 PRTs. The regional manager or permanency team selects cases. Cases may be selected based on length of stay or age of the youth. DCS policy requires any case with a permanency plan of another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) to be referred for a PRT. Statewide, 63% of PRTs have improved at least one permanency status level; of the 29% of the closed PRT cases, 66% of those achieved the “gold standard” of legal permanency; and 77% of regions have a 50% success rate or higher in achieving the “gold standard” of permanency (the majority of those cases achieve it through adoption).

The permanency outcomes for the 196 cases closed after PRT through July 15, 2014 include:

- Reunification-55 children, 28%
- Adoption-58 children, 30%
- Guardianship-135 children, 8%
- APPLA-34 children, 17%
- Bureau of Development Disability-6 children, 3%
- Fit and Willing Relative-2 children, 1%
- Department of Correction-6 children,3%
- Runaway-7 children, 4%
- State hospital-1 child, 1%
- Other-12 children, 6%

Lisa Rich, Deputy Director, Services and Outcomes. Ms. Rich previewed the Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data Site administered by the Children’s Bureau, an office of the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (<http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data/overview>). The Child Welfare Outcomes Report provides information on the performance of states in seven categories-demographics, maltreatment, foster care, permanency/adoption, context, outcomes and composite). Data for the reports come from data submitted by the states to the National Child Abuse and Neglect

Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting Systems. The site has a report builder that allows users to select the specific state(s), data, and years they would like to view.

7. **Legal Orphans Project.** Tabled until October 3, 2014.
8. **Other Matters.** Ms. James agreed to include Angela Reid-Brown on the DCS policy distribution list. Angela will forward policy information to CWIC members as she receives it.

Future Meeting Dates:

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| October 3, 2014 | 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. | Indiana Judicial Center |
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