

Coos County Foster Care Group
Meeting #2 Notes – Draft - Teleconference on 1-9-09
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

In Attendance:

Betty Albertson
Judy McMakin
Nancylee Stewart
Paula Warr
Megara Kastner, facilitator

Representative for Governor’s Disproportionality in Child Welfare Taskforce:

Three names were brought to the group. Ginger Swan who is the Mental Health Director. Nancylee thought she would be good because of her mental health background and she is a member of the Cherokee Tribe. Laurie Potts, Director of the Family Center, was the second name. Betty had talked with Laurie and she was interested. Laurie, although Anglo, does a lot of advocacy work with and for the Hispanic community in the county. Thus, Betty thought she would be a good nominee. Kevin Stufflebean, this group’s Convener, also expressed an interest to Judy. All three people have some issues about the time involved and travel. Laurie would have a difficult time traveling up to Salem on a regular basis. This is also true for Ginger. Kevin has a very busy schedule.

The group decided that they would probably nominate Kevin.

Task: Megara was going to check with Margaret Van Vliet, the Oregon Solutions Project Manager to determine if she could call Kory Murphy, Taskforce Leader, to answer the following questions. If it is best for Margaret to talk with Kory, that is fine as long as the group gets the answers to the questions listed below:

1. When, precisely, did this team have to give their nomination to the Taskforce?
2. When would the Taskforce start meeting?
3. How often is the Taskforce planning to meet?
4. Where is the Taskforce planning to meet?

All of these questions are pertinent to the group in helping them determine their final, final choice for the nominee and help the nominee better understand his/her commitment.

Goal #1 – Increase Relative Placements by 50%

The group revisited Goal #1 – Increasing Relative Placements – to make sure they had all the initial details covered. In addition to what was discussed at the first meeting there are more strategies for this goal.

First, there was a correction to the first meeting’s notes. Under the discussion on Goal #1 the second bullet needs to be rewritten as follows: “The current IV-E Waiver Plan states that 20 families will utilize the counseling services to help stabilize the family by June 2009.” Nancylee and Paula explained they have identified many relatives and “not too many placements” have been made.

Task: Nancylee and Paula will make sure to have specific data on the number of relatives identified and number of relative placements by 1-22-09.

Additional Strategies:

1. Detailing out the data for both waivers so there is a benchmark from which to begin

2. Conduct one counseling session before the child is placed with the family.
3. Conduct a second counseling session after the child is placed with the family.
4. Increase the number of relative placements from the current goal of 20% to 30%.
 - a. The group talked that without specific numbers to mark 30% is difficult.
 - b. **Task:** NancyLee will take the lead to aggregate the specific Friday counts.
5. Get information from the Casey Family Foundation about successful strategies from Counties and Communities similar to Coos around the U.S.
 - a. **Task:** Megara will check with the Casey Family Foundation for details.
 - b. **Task:** NancyLee will check with Kevin George at the State for the specifics on the state-wide policy.
6. **Task:** Betty will work with Maria for data to help this group determine the exact numbers that will equal a 50% increase – in other words, going from a 20% relative placement rate to a 30% placement rate.

Goal #2 – Reducing the number of children entering Foster Care by 10%

The group then discussed their Goal #2. NancyLee explained the State had reduced the number of children entering care by 10%. So how might this affect Coos' strategies if the State is already at 10% reduction? She also said the Casey Foundation's data is based on the number of children per 1000. In Coos, they have raw per-child data and so both data sets need to be correlated for an accurate point from which to begin.

NancyLee also explained that the number of children entering Care varies quite a bit. In 2001, the numbers were at the highest - 250 children. On average, Coos has between 165-167 children entering Care each year. Currently Coos is at about 140 children for 2008.

The group would like more information from Casey Family Foundation about other strategies that have worked around the U.S. to reduce the number of children entering Care. **Task:** Megara will check with Casey.

Additional Strategies:

1. Once this group has the Casey information, modify it to use in Coos.
2. Get more children into HeadStart.
3. Determine the number of Family Plans that were/are developed and use this statistic in correlation to the reducing the number of children entering Care. Each family plan established means one or more less children put into Care.
 - a. **Task:** Paula will get the numbers of Family Plans
 - b. **Task:** Paula will talk with her team on all the proposed goals and strategies to get their ideas, since they are "on the ground" working with children and families. She will bring their ideas to this group.
4. Talk to State Legislators on Child Welfare to advocate for partnering services and collaboration programs. Create advocacy and collaboration with partnering services such as HeadStart and Health Start.
5. Support partner prevention programs at State and local levels.

Goal #3 – Reduce the abuse recurrence.

The group discussed several ideas and strategies to achieve success with this goal.

Task: Paula will also take this information to her team to get their feedback and ideas. Then bring that information back to the group.

Strategies:

1. Increase wrap-around services for the first six months. Enhance what Coos is currently doing. Consider using the Zero To Two program as part of this enhancement. The group talked about how so many of the families are isolated and are not connected to the community and it is important to connect them to the community.
2. Connect the family and children in more positive ways to the community. Determine ways to tie the community school and families into positive activities. Continue offering Parenting Classes since there are already many through the State contract.
3. Support mentors. Expand the current mentoring program by adding more mentors and determine ways for the retiree/mentor to stay in closer contact with the families. RSVP might be a good group to establish a "family friend" for the first year.
4. Create a support group for families not in child welfare (OK, someone help me here – my notes are fuzzy and my memory is even fuzzier - what did you mean for this one?)
5. Take this to the larger community group meeting for more ideas and how to hone in on the details while looking for collaborations and partnerships.

Community Meeting Details:

The group discussed some of the details for the Community Meeting. They also discussed who should be invited. Megara suggested the keep the group relatively small and select people/agency representatives that will come to the table ready and able to take action. The group determined a list of 23 additional people.

Task: Betty wrote down all the specific names and will send the list to everyone on this team to make sure she has everyone. Once Betty has the complete list, she will add addresses, emails, and phone numbers then submit all of that information to Megara.

Task: Betty will secure a location and let Megara know as soon as possible.

Task: Megara will check with Margaret at Oregon Solutions to determine who sends out the invitations. If it is DHS, Megara will forward all the names and information to DHS.

Task: Megara will check to see if there is money floating out there somewhere to help with food and refreshments for the meeting.

Task: Judy will do packets for each participant. The packets will include:

- Project overview
- Local Data
- Casey Family Foundation information including strategies from other states
- Governor's Taskforce executive order
- (Megara also suggests some blank paper, pens, and a contact list of all those attending and this committee's individual contact information)
- (Megara also suggests a timeline)

Proposed Preliminary Meeting Agenda:

- Kevin will introduce the meeting, give some background, and give the "charge" to the group.
- Each team member will take a goal and help facilitate the large group discussion. Megara will help where needed.
 - Assigned goals are:
 - Increase relative placements – Betty
 - Reduce those entering care – Paula
 - Reduce abuse recurrence – Judy
 - Increase the number of exits – Nancy Lee
 - Reduce Disproportionality – Yvonne

- Megara will do the wrap up and set the stage for the next meeting.
- (Probably we also need some final words from Kevin, as the Convener)

Next Steps:

This Group will meet again, on their own without Megara's facilitation to talk about Goal #4 – Increasing the number of exits and Goal #5 – Reducing Disproportionality.

Task: Betty will send the notes from this meeting to Megara as soon as possible after the meeting.