

March 16, 2020 CCFC Minutes

Members Present:

Jody Becker, Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Commission Co-Chair
Justice Barbara Madsen, Washington State Supreme Court, Commission Co-Chair
Raven Arroway-Healing, Northwest Intertribal Council
Jim Bamberger, Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA)
Jolie Bwiza, Tacoma Chapter Leader, Mockingbird Youth Network
Beth Canfield, Foster Parent Allies of Washington State
Mike Canfield, Foster Parent Allies of Washington State
Senator Jeannie Darneille, Washington State Senate
Jeannie Kee, Foster Youth Alumni Representative
Laurie Lippold, Partners for our Children
Jill Malat, Office of Civil Legal Aid
Jill May, Washington Children & Families
Tonia McClanahan, Parent Advocate Representative
Joanne Moore, Washington State Office of Public Defense
Ryan Murrey, Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs
Representative Tana Senn, Washington House of Representatives
Rachel Sottile, Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ)
Carrie Wayno, Attorney General's Office (Designee for Bob Ferguson)

Members Not Present:

Peggy Carlson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
Tory Gildred, Coordinated Care
Judge Kitty Ann van Doorninck, Superior Court Judges' Association
Martin Mueller, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (Designee for Chris Reykdal)

Guests Present:

Laura Alfani, DCYF
Kwesi Booker, DCYF
Patrick Dowd, Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds
Sally Erny, National CASA
Erinn Havig, DCYF
Kyra Ingraham, DCYF
Lauren Frederick, Mockingbird Society
Juliette Knight, DCYF
Jess Lewis, DCYF
Angela Murray, Washington CASA Association
Dory Nicpon, Administrative Office of the Courts
Jenni Olmstead, DCYF
Michael Shinn, Attorney General's Office
Morgan Silverman, CCYJ
Phyllis Sutton, Mockingbird Society

Kelly Warner-King, CCYJ

Staff Present:

Cindy Bricker, Administrative Office of the Courts
Moriah Freed, Administrative Office of the Courts
Susan Peterson, Administrative Office of the Courts
Sehej Singh, Center for Children & Youth Justice

Call to Order:

Justice Madsen called the meeting to order at 1:05pm and completed roll call and introductions.

Approval of the December CCFC Meeting Minutes:

Justice Madsen invited a motion to approve the December 2019 meeting minutes. Ryan Murrey sent suggested corrections to Sehej Singh regarding the CASA discussion. Justice Madsen put off the motion to approve the December minutes to the CCFC meeting in May in order to provide an opportunity for members to review the suggested corrections.

CCFC Member Updates:

Justice Madsen referred to the new Supreme Court order adding new positions on the Commission. Cindy Bricker stated that the Commission added the following members:

- Tory Gildred (Coordinated Care)
- Jill May (Washington Children & Families)
- Laurie Lippold (Partners for our Children)
- Rachel Sottile (Center for Children & Youth Justice)

The Commission is still seeking an additional youth member—Cindy Bricker stated that she is working with DCYF to fill this youth position on the Commission.

Justice Madsen proposed to add a representative from the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA) as a member of the Commission. WAJCA represents a critical aspect of the foster care system, as dependency cases are heard in juvenile courts. All present members approved this membership request.

Jim Bamberger stated how the Commission order requires the current Executive Director of Washington (WA) State CASA be a permanent member. As there is now no such organization, Jim inquired whether the successor organization should be filling that position for WA State CASA. Justice Madsen responded that further discussion will occur at the May CCFC meeting.

DCYF and Legislative Session Updates:

COVID-19 DCYF Update:

Prior to providing updates from DCYF, Jody Becker prefaced the discussion by acknowledging how DCYF has been affected by COVID-19 and the Governor's order of a State of Emergency.

DCYF set up its new Emergency Operations Center and website related to COVID-19 DCYF resources. There will be additional information on the DCYF COVID-19 website regarding child care and visitation. Jody urged the Commission to send concerns and suggestions to a specific mailbox that DCYF has set up on its website and emphasized the WA State Department of Health as an additional resource.

FFPSA, Program Improvement Plan (PIP), and Dependency Grant Updates:

DCYF received high level feedback on its Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Prevention Plan. Rachel Mercer, DCYF, is currently organizing teams to respond to the federal government on areas where they need additional feedback.

DCYF has not yet received feedback on its two-year Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Nor has DCYF received feedback for its Permanency Grant. The PIP and Grant are being reviewed simultaneously, as they are designed to mutually support each other.

DCYF Adolescent Programs Update:

Jess Lewis now has a team of nine individuals working in adolescent programs—these programs include independent living services, extended foster care (EFC), K-12 education, post-secondary education, education training voucher programs, mentoring, youth engagement, and Passion2Action (P2A).

This DCYF division is focusing efforts on providing information regarding COVID-19 to youth in care, specifically EFC youth who are either on college campuses or housed under a DCYF program. Jess' division is developing an adolescent-specific communication line.

The Adolescent division is going through a potential redesign with a human-centered approach. Jess is partnering with the organization *Think of Us*, which provides human-centered and technological solutions.

Questions and Comments from CCFC members:

- Jill Malat asked Jess regarding precautions in place for youth who are in group homes, Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR), etc. Jess responded that many at DCYF are attempting to craft plans and protocols regarding this. JR has certain health related protocols that they are implementing. Jill further asked whether there was any talk from DCYF to release lower-risk youth who are currently incarcerated.
- Laurie Lippold asked Jess regarding two new DCYF adolescent programs positions, as the legislature is funding two middle-management positions for adolescent programs. The positions include:
 - Equity Program Administrator to implement the racial equity plan and LGBTQ projects.
 - Systems of Care Program Administrator to evaluate where programs intersect through collaborations and expand capacity for youth who need substance use disorder treatment.
- Jess also mentioned that the Safe Harbors legislation (HB 1775), passed this session, provides 3.5 FTEs for DCYF to improve services (one is a full time CSEC Program Manager, the other two are liaisons).

DCYF Legislative Update:

Kwesi Booker provided an update regarding field operations, including the completion of DCYF's outstanding investigations that are overdue. They have also begun to look at data to identify gaps in practice on a regional basis. DCYF is also including The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence with this initiative, to support training.

Questions and Comments from CCFC members:

- Laurie Lippold asked to what extent DCYF is involved in discussions on the evolving role of foster parents. Kwesi answered that the team is considering how case management can better support these relationships, especially between parents and foster parents while keeping the child in focus.

Juliette Knight, DCYF Government Affairs, reviewed a document entitled, "Child Welfare Bills of Interest." The highlighted bills included:

- CSEC Senate bill that includes a work group to issue recommendations for obtaining evidence to prosecute CSEC perpetrators.
- Family Connections Program legislation (HB 2525) establishes the Family Connections Program to strengthen families and prevent future child trauma by facilitating communication, where appropriate, between foster families and birth families when a child is dependent and in out-of-home placement.
- HB 2711 regarding educational outcomes, continues work with OSPI for students in foster care and those experiencing homelessness.
- HB 2873, Families in Conflict Bill, a continuation of the work that came out of the 2019 session in regards to SB 5290.

Questions and Comments from CCFC members:

- Laurie Lippold asked about implementation of these bills, especially with COVID-19. Juliette answered that DCYF is thinking of distinguishing the simple, straightforward bills that can be implemented now versus those that have more complexity and require more work with stakeholders.
- Senator Darneille noted that there were several significant expansions of resources for emergency response time and for the phenomenon of children spending hundreds of days in hotels—this includes funding for enhanced placement opportunities. Additionally, there was over \$7 million that the legislature put into Behavior Rehabilitation Services (BRS) placements (including children who were sent out of state to bring them back to WA), and full implementation of SB 5290, the Safe Harbors pilot legislation, and Family Connections Program. Senator Darneille also mentioned the increase in the rate of foster parent payments by a 3-4% raise and license portability. She added that although the bill did not pass, the bill for expanding Baby Courts across the state raised awareness of the roles of specialty courts and enhanced case management.
- Representative Tana Senn added comments on a discussion of more emergency beds across the state for youth in care, the increase in foster care payments, and a pilot for a combined foster care and child care license (especially in rural communities) so individuals only go through one approval cycle. There is funding to focus on getting families (especially kinship providers) through the home inspection process faster, and creating an online mandatory reporter system for additional efficiency. Representative Senn added that having a half-time school counselor in

every high-poverty elementary school across WA will be beneficial and that she looks forward to seeing this take place through a potential bill. Child care improvement rates increased to \$80 million, including 12 months of homeless childcare. A bill regarding an increase for CPAs (Child Placement Agencies) to continue to recruit foster parents and serve foster parents with training, etc., did not pass during this session.

DCYF Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Activities:

Jennifer Olmstead presented on DCYF's activities for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Jennifer highlighted the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign in which DCYF will distribute pinwheels statewide. DCYF also created coloring pages for parents and children to work together as a part of the campaign. DCYF hopes to engage children in a different way this year, as most campaigns in the past have focused on parents and communities. This team was intentional in terms of the design and accessibility of the coloring book as they included de-biased characters and also created a Spanish-language version.

Questions and Comments from CCFC members:

- Laurie Lippold suggested collaboration with OSPI for distribution of the coloring books.
- Senator Jeannie Darneille suggested distributing the coloring books through food banks.

AGO Time-in-System Data Presentation:

Carrie Wayno introduced Michael Shinn of the Attorney General's Office (AGO), Division Chief for the Regional Services Division. Michael created a report from the AGO's case management system data for the counties that the office covers. The Time-in-System report depicts how much time children are spending in an open dependency case and how much time it takes to achieve different types of permanency. The AGO measures average time from dependency filing to permanent outcomes by the end of the fiscal year in AGO counties. The outcomes are broken down into two categories: "deficiencies remedied" and "deficiencies *not* remedied" by the end of the fiscal year. The AGO tracks the average time from when a child is made legally free (LFY) until the child is adopted. Additionally, the office tracks the average time for children who turn 18 while they are still in the dependency system (while separately tracking LFY in this group).

Michael showed a map with cases in which a child reached a permanent resolution during FY19 and explained how cases are resolved across WA. According to the data, most of the time, there are more cases that resolve with return homes and dismissals (deficiencies remedied) compared to the "deficiencies not remedied" outcomes. However, King and Clark counties have struggled the most with "deficiencies not remedied" outcomes. The data also shows the average time counties take to reach adoption after the child is legally free, which dovetails with the AOC data. Though the legislature's target for adoption is 180 days, averages across counties are higher than this target.

Questions and Comments from CCFC members:

- Jim Bamberger asked how certain numbers correlate with AOC's timeliness data (with the exception of King and Pierce Counties). Michael responded by stating that AOC's data prolongs the time as it does not "cut off" when a child is deemed legally free, unlike the AGO time-in-system data.

- Joanne Moore asked regarding cases that take longer than a year to get resolved and how these are counted in the AGO data. Michael explained that each of the data points represents a child who has reached a permanent outcome. The numbers constitute the average number of days it took a child to reach that outcome.
- Certain members pointed out that this data can be a beacon of hope, as the data demonstrates that most outcomes are “deficiencies remedied,” reflecting desired results of legislation, i.e., reunification.
- Jim Bamberger questioned if the data can be disaggregated by race and ethnicity and also whether the children had legal representation. Michael responded that it is not possible to disaggregate the data based on race/ethnicity or child legal representation within the AGO case management system.
- Senator Darneille noted disproportionality in Pierce County, and how this merits statewide attention.
- Ryan Murrey asked if it is possible to determine a child’s age through the AGO system data. Michael answered that there is not a way to average the age of the children. Ryan also questioned Michael regarding how the AGO uses and plans to use this data to build their practice. Michael said that biannually, all the managing attorneys for all of the offices doing DCYF work in the state meet and discuss resources, results, challenges, successes, and this data is a piece of information that will be considered in those meetings.

Office of Family and Children’s Ombudsman (OFCO) Annual Report:

Patrick Dowd, Director of OFCO, presented results from the 2019 Annual Report. OFCO investigates complaints, intervenes to rectify problems, and identifies systemic issues. Additionally, OFCO is involved in Critical Incident Reviews (i.e., the child fatality and near fatality review process and implementation of recommendations). Two systemic issues that OFCO highlighted in their annual report:

- There is a continuing problem with children staying in hotels (placement exceptions)
- Problems with CPS intake that OFCO identified

The legislative budget that was passed provided funding for 12 emergent placement beds and 21 behavioral rehabilitation services (BRS) placements. The supplemental budget also provided an increase for BRS providers and funding to assist relative/kin caregivers to become licensed foster parents.

The OFCO report demonstrated how in 2018, CPS Intake received nearly 130,000 reports of suspected child abuse/neglect, a 40% increase from 2010. Mandated reporters are on hold for an average of 40-60 minutes. This leads to dropped calls and endangers children (CPS does not have a process to document when calls are dropped). OFCO recommends that CPS implement an online reporting system for mandated reporters (as is available for Adult Protective Services [APS]), which has been addressed though the supplemental budget.

Questions and Comments from CCFC Members:

- Laurie Lippold asked regarding the psychiatric facilities where children from placement exceptions are sent to and whether the children have access to the Children’s Long-Term Inpatient Program (CLIP). Patrick responded that when a child has a placement exception, the next events become one crisis placement after another. After time in a psychiatric facility, a child may be eligible for discharge. However, the issue of finding a placement will continue, especially

when there are no CLIP beds or group home placements available. Patrick does not have data broken down into how many CLIP or BRS beds are needed to solve this but will work on this as a legislative response.

State Team Meeting

This item was continued to the May CCFC meeting.

Zero To Three's Safe Babies Court Team:

Rachel Sottile, from the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ), Kelly Warner-King, and Morgan Silverman, presented on the Zero to Three's Safe Babies Court Team (SBCT) initiative. National Zero to Three is an organization that focuses on infant mental health and therapeutic court interventions. The organization approached CCYJ to: analyze statewide and local data on Washington's children under the age of three; engage statewide, regional, and local stakeholders to strategize SBCT implementation in communities across the state; and create a blueprint for state-wide SBCT implementation and sustainability. CCYJ will deliver an implementation plan to national Zero to Three and identify recommendations for high impact opportunities of potential investment of an SBCT expansion.

Rachel explained how 42% of the dependency cases filed in 2018 in WA were for babies aged zero to three. Hence, this presents an enormous opportunity for impact and research into why infants are entering the dependency system and what permanency looks like for infants. CCYJ's role in this initiative is to have conversations with stakeholders such as CCFC members. These conversations are meant to inform possible opportunities for local jurisdictions in WA to be SBCT implementation sites, an approach grounded in therapeutic interventions for Babies Zero to Three. CCYJ's role will be to provide an implementation plan to National Zero to Three recommending jurisdictions to be pilot sites in WA. CCYJ hopes that the Commission will provide an important voice as this work continues to grow.

Rachel highlighted the achievements of Pierce County's Baby Court program and how this is an opportunity for CCYJ and National Zero to Three to provide additional support for Pierce County. CCYJ will cull together funding opportunities, including federal funding, potential public-private partnerships, and planning for funding through the 2021 legislative session. CCYJ will provide educational opportunities through webinars, present data and findings, and open communication lines from stakeholders for feedback. There will be a potential convening with national experts on June 15th for those who are interested in being an implementation site and to see what additional resources jurisdictions need to be an implementation site.

Kelly Warner-King then discussed data to understand the issues and the potential impact in WA. The data reflects an age and racial disproportionality and other inequities in the dependency system, reasons for removal of young children, and specifically the number of intakes of substance exposed newborns.

Questions and Comments from CCFC Members:

- Juliette Knight from DCYF stated that she will connect the Safe Babies Team (SBT) to the Office of Innovation and Alignment (OIA).

- Laurie Lippold asked regarding the organizations SBT has partnered with for this initiative, and how they all connect. Kelly responded that a goal is to bring the many organizations and partners under an umbrella to leverage resources where they exist and put in resources where they do not.
- Justice Madsen suggested communicating with the Superior Court Judges Association (SCJA) for further support in the initiative and design committee.

Board of Judicial Administration (BJA) Legislative Committee:

This item was continued to the May CCFC meeting.

Other Discussion and Updates from CCFC Members:

Name Changes for Organizations:

- Foster Parent Association is now officially Foster Parent Allies of Washington State
- Washington CASA is now officially Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs

Update on Funding From Senator Darneille:

Senator Darneille stated there is funding available this year for extracurricular activities for young people in foster care.

Children Representation Study Update:

Jill Malat announced the publication of the Interim Report for Children Representation Study underway in Grant and Lewis Counties. The preliminary data shows that early appointment speeds permanency by 22%.

Adjourned at 3:55pm by Justice Barbara Madsen.
