



**Regional Service Council Minutes
Region # 9**

Meeting Date: 5/25/07
Meeting Location: Hendricks County Dept. of Child Services
6781 E US Hwy. 36, Avon, IN 46123

Council Members Present:

The Honorable Judge David – Boone County Circuit Court, The Honorable Judge Headley – Putnam County Circuit Court, Barbara South – Director, Putnam County DCS, Steve Vaughn - Director, Montgomery County DCS, Harmony Gist- FCM, Morgan County, Tim Miller- Director, Morgan County DCS, Kandi Killin- Boone County GAL/CASA, and Char Burkett-Sims- DCS Regional Manager, Region 9.

Guests Present:

Andrea Goodwin - Hendricks County DCS, Kamilla Aeschliman-Boone County DCS, Mark Fairchild – Region 9 Community Partners for Child Safety, Patti Harmless- Putnam County Youth Development and Community Youth Services Bureau

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 9:00 AM.

Child Welfare Reform:

Results of QSR

- In comparison to other states that have started the new Practice Reform, Region 9 proves to be more effective.
- There are some specific areas that need to improvement
 - In our efforts to keep children safe, are we also making sure the parent is safe
 - CFTMS are working but we need improvement on informal support systems and talking about difficult and underlying issues during the CFTMS.
- Montgomery County will be having a Federal Service Review in July. This Also includes Marion and Jefferson Counties. They are looking at outcomes of effective services and making sure that we get Federal funding.

Strategic Plan:

- The final draft of the strategic plan for region 9 was presented to the regional services council.
- As part of the planning process 4 separate focus groups were brought together to gather input on what they feel is working well / not well and what can we do to improve. This included:

FCMs

Clerical Staff

Parents

Core Focus Group – (Service providers and other key roles in the community)

The planning outcomes include:

Safety, Permanency, Well-Being

Outcome #1

- **Retaining a competent and caring staff**
 - Not more than 5% of staff losses from 6.1.07 will result from involuntary termination or dissatisfaction
 - Increase the level of staff support

Outcome #2

- **Improve the quality of services provided by DCS in Region 9**
 - Improve the effectiveness of the CFTM as measured by increased participation of informal supports and plans that address the “long term view” for case closure. Written expectations will be established that indicate.

Outcome #3

- **Foster Care Improvement Plan: Recruitment, Training, and Retention**

This plan has not yet been finalized as improvement plans development is being facilitated by the Villages under contract with DCS.

- Increase the Number of Foster Homes
- Increase Foster Parent Training and Support
- Increase Access to the use of Respite Care by Foster parents

Safety Outcomes:

Outcome #1

- **Increase the rate of the absence of repeat maltreatment by 4.26% to an annual average of 90% by 5.31.08**
13 month average as of 3/07 was 85.84%
 - Increase meaningful contacts with Parents by FCMs from a monthly average of 2.98 (13 month average 3.06 through 3.07) to an annual average of 3.5 contacts per month.
 - Develop regional policy guidance regarding the conditions that need to exist before case closure is initiated.
 - Improve the availability and accessibility of quality substance abuse treatment services utilized by adults and children in all 5 local offices.

Other topics discussed:

A suggestion was made that FCMS meet with Judges and Probation on an informal basis in order to minimize the anxiety in a formal situation. This plan could possibly improve the way that the FCM handles their role in the courtroom. They may do a better job in feeling more comfortable in an uncomfortable situation.

Judge David from Boone County Circuit Court inquired about sending his staff to other courtrooms in the region to observe their court process and provide feedback to him.

This would serve in sharing observations, not by comparing work but their courtroom process. Could this also be something that the other judges would be interested in? This could possibly tie in with the changes within the region as far as how we operate as a region.

Relative Placements

Concerns:

- How can we compensate relative placements financially?
- Can we provide more support and resources to relatives?
- Can we provide a handout to the family that would cover all the resources available to them?
- Can we use expedited means of getting money from the parents set a compliance hearing, letting them know that we are following up and hold them in contempt if they do not pay.
- Relative homes need training as regular foster homes.
- Experiment with different benchmarks to fit our region

Communication Plan:

- Each Region needs to exhibit an educational campaign for drug involvement, child abuse, foster care
- Keeping the child in their own community.
- Meet and greet nights for foster parents

CPT:

The purpose of the Child Protection Team is for quality assurance and it is mandatory.

- There is concern that the CPT members feel that their input is not considered in the decision making.
- Each county defines how their CPT is conducted.
- We need to focus on consistency within the region. Could we look at a region Child Protection Team
- CPT is not as effective as it needs to be.
- There is concern that only unsubstantiated cases are pulled. A random sample of unsubstantiated, substantiated, and indicated cases needs to be pulled.

Community Partners for Child Safety:

The number of referrals continues to go up. They are getting referrals from teachers, communities, and clients referring other clients. They have hired 3 new staff and are looking to hire another in the next couple of weeks. This is making a big difference compared to one staff member serving all 5 counties.

They are anticipating having an office in each county by next year.

Community Partners is working actively with the community, partnering with other agencies, using the same model as DCS.

Next Meeting:

Date: 6-22-07

Location: Hendricks Co. Department of Child Services, 6181 E. US Hwy. 36,
Avon, IN 46123

Time: 9:00 AM

Meeting concluded at 11:20 AM