Community Taskforce RECOMMENDATIONS – Foster Care System
April 4, 2022

Following is a list of recommendations developed from Task Force conversations. Please review and select your Top 5 priorities. All recommendations will move forward. Priorities will allow some recommendations to rise to the top for early consideration and impact.

We recommend:

DCF and its Mental Health Support

1. Formalizing standard procedures so both the Child Placing Agency and Case Management Provider are legally responsible for the foster children in their care.

2. Developing protocol that states if a Child Placing Agency worker is not available during a crisis, a supervisor will be called.

3. Requiring the Child Placing Agency and/or Case Management Provider has a local contact trained in mental health crisis response on call 24/7 for crisis situations; and create consequences for any agency not following this requirement

4. Supporting the passage of HB 2468 and HB 2469, which establishes the foster youth and foster parent bill of rights and requires distribution to each foster youth and foster family; ask Sedgwick County to add HB 2468 and HB 2469 to its 2023 Legislative Agenda.

5. Requiring DCF and its contracting agencies to ensure employees, foster families and foster children receive benefits that include mental health and mindfulness coaches; additionally, ensure staffing that will allow covering those positions during time off for benefits such as mental health/mindfulness, vacations, etc.

Training

6. Developing and implementing a standardized training program through Child Alliance for foster families that would include topics on mental health first aid, adolescent brain development and de-stigmatization of mental health.

7. DCF design and disseminate a roadmap to assist foster families in accessing local community services and support to aid in the care of youth in the foster care system.

8. Requiring foster families to complete a standardized program in adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and trauma-informed care that are culturally relevant, and gender-responsive. If they don't participate, they are disqualified from participating in the foster care program.

Community/Support

9. Extending a thank-you to foster families for the support and sacrifice they make in providing homes for children in need of care

10. Fully funding evidence-based prevention and early intervention programs for youth and families before youth are placed in the foster care system, including intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) services, support for families in the home, behavioral programs, and substance abuse programs, among others. Doing so will build stronger families and alleviate stress on the foster care system – allowing for improved levels of care.

11. Creating an eco-system that connects community resources, grassroot organizations, advocates, coaches, champions and others with DCF, Law Enforcement, COMCARE, JIAC and JDF and other systems that serve foster care children in a mental health crisis

Data

12. Developing and implementing a pre/post survey to evaluate satisfaction of families who participate in Family First and Family Preservation programs.

13. Expanding the Crossover Youth Practice Model for sharing data and system protocols between Department for Children and Families (DCF), school districts, and the juvenile justice system, to allow those agencies to effectively serve the foster youth in their care.

14. Administering an assessment (using disaggregated data) of the foster care system that allows root cause issues to be identified and a strategic plan developed that will address barriers and systemic issues.

15. Supporting the enactment of SB 12 (approved in 2022), which requires DCF to develop an implementation plan for a set of performance-based contracts to provide an array of evidence-based prevention and early intervention services.

Recommendation 12 – not full consensus on this recommendation

- Evaluate licensing requirements for foster care homes and address barriers for number of siblings in a home, ages of children, etc.