

Community Taskforce to Review Youth Corrections Systems Standards

Monday, March 28, 2022 at 4:30 pm

Taskforce Members In-Person

Marquetta Atkins
Holly Osborne
Jazmine Rogers
Valerie Leon
Rhonda Lewis
Monique Garcia
Debbie Kennedy
Steve House
Tracey Mason, Sr.
Yeni Telles
Poncho Bustos

Taskforce Members via Zoom

Mike Fonkert
Naquela Pack
Annmarie Arensberg
April Terry
Nina Shaw-Woody
Larry Burks, Sr.
Lamont Anderson

Resource Members

- Kristin Peterman – Via Zoom
- Hope Cooper – Via Zoom
- Steven Stonehouse
- Paul Duff
- Shantel Westbrook
- Elora Forshee

Purpose of the Task Force: To review and recommend preferred system improvements after the incident and death of Cedric Lofton

Goal of the Task Force: Develop recommendations for improvements and changes to the existing system standards and performance of Department of Children and Families (DCF), law enforcement, and youth corrections programs

Today: Review, discuss and prioritize Task Force recommendations for Foster Care System/Mental Health and 911.Updates

1. List of Proposed Changes to System-Level Policies, Procedures

Timeline

March 28	Foster Care and 911 Recommendations
April 4	WPD and JIAC Recommendations
April 11	WPD, JIAC and Legislative Agenda Items

April 18
April 25

Review of DRAFT Recommendations
Final review of report

Foster Care System – NEW ADDITIONS

1. That the language from DCF clearly states that both the Child Placing Agency and the Case Management Provider are responsible for the foster children in their care. I do not agree that the Child Placing Agency is only responsible for the family. I believe that this created a gap in service concerning Cedric Lofton.
 - Kennedy would like to have the language clarify from DCF who is responsible for the child and asked the question, “Does that mean if you are responsible for the family that you are not responsible for the child?”
 - Telles calls for consequences/accountability on the organizations that are providing services because of policies that are in place that are not followed
 - Osbourne states, to safely get a kid screened you need someone to go to them in crisis. A St. Francis worker is not a therapist that can screen a child for a mental health crisis. That needs to be the Mental Health Center, that needs to be the mobile crisis unit. So, that's the resources that are needed and that's what should have happened that night. The people on call at St. Francis are not social workers.
 - Osbourne states, we have to have community resources available. Resources from 911 to dispatch. We have to have other options to go and help a child.
 - Mason states, a ball was dropped, what are the consequences - and asked about the consequences
 - Osbourne states, what should happen is the foster care worker for the CPA is on call for their homes
 - Recommendation that there needs to be a resource that can go out and assess the child at the site and not necessarily dependent on the child being transported to COMCARE is one need
 - Recommendation that foster care needs to have a local agent when the assigned child placing agency foster care worker is unavailable, there needs to be someone locally that can intervene before it goes to 911
 - Shaw-Woody suggests the language can be, if the CPA worker is not available, a supervisor from the local CPA should be called
 - Osbourne states, regarding holding people accountable, DCF does have a process for CPA complaints and you can get a violation for violating your CPA regulation. There can be financial consequences attached to that violation
 - Rogers asks if foster children are told they can place complaints like this
 - Recommendation for some sort of formalized standard procedures that requires both agencies to clearly state that they are responsible for the children in their care
 - Recommendation that if a CPA worker is not available, a supervisor will be called

- Recommendation to require a person be on call in Sedgwick County at all times for crisis situations and that there would be consequences for not meeting that requirement.
 - Recommendation that there is the bill of rights for foster youth and understanding that there are complaint system in place
2. DCF – Assess satisfaction of past and current families in Family First and Family preservation programs. Revise based on discussion
 3. Assess top causes for high risk of removal - What is the need? Fund that. Recommendation 3 combined with Recommendation 8.
 - Rogers suggests this could be something DCF could track annually and put out in their annual reports
 - Recommendation to have training on adolescent brain growth, mental health first aid, and destigmatizing mental health, and substance use/abuse.

Foster Care and Mental Health Systems Recommendations

4. Ensure foster families have knowledge and training on how to respond to a mental health crisis/Provide specialized training for foster parents
 - Kennedy recommends one standardized training mandated by DCF built out by Child Alliance for all foster families so each agency is giving the same information to all foster families
5. Ask DCF to develop a roadmap for families to guide parents/caregivers on how to access services and support
 - Discussion regarding foster care parents and cultural competency
 - Leon comments with any parent who is taking a child who does not look like them, they are assessed on how the parent will keep kids connected to that culture
 - Burks comments if foster parents do not wish to undergo this cultural competency training, it should disqualify them for becoming a foster parent/foster parent family
6. Develop programs and services that are culturally relevant and meaningful to youth
 - a. I believe in addition to being culturally-sensitive/aware, we should also suggest being gender-responsive and trauma-informed. We say “culture” in many places—I would encourage the addition of the gender and trauma/developmental training be added in all places.
 - Recommendation Regarding the cultural sensitivity cultural competency training for the system for services and support that foster parents’ access. To ensure that families are aware of the resources that are within their community that are culturally relevant
 - Another component is training internally on how on learning how to identify and recognize, where there are potential pitfalls, because there is no cultural sensitivity in making the recommendation
 - Telles recommends that trainings be created for different languages i.e. Spanish, Swahili, Eritrean, Arabic

Foster Care and Mental Health Systems Recommendations

7. Ask DCF and child placement agencies to invest in mental health and mindfulness coaches
 - Recommended mental health and mindfulness coaches for staff, foster families and the children
 - This worker does not have to be a Child Placing Agency or Case Management Provider worker, it could be subcontracted and it could be another organization providing it as a benefit or an employee that works for DCF
 - Recommended to ask DCF to invest in mental health and mindfulness coaches, for their own staff.
 - Recommended to ask DCF to include mindfulness practices in contract with the agencies that they contract with, for employees, foster families, and foster children: employees are the priority - to provide some relief for staff that allows them vacation mental health and mindfulness days, etc.
8. Require DCF to track cases, establish a baseline, set goals and metrics to measure success/failures]
 - Fonkert recommends that DCF should disaggregate all of their data points by race on their publicly available data website. DCF does not currently publicly report data that is disaggregated by race for all of their data points. Categories like rate of moves per a thousand days, placement in same school district, number of moves in care; and length of stay in care are all data points that should disaggregated by race
 - Arensberg recommends having data on the number of placement disruptions that occur per year? And how those are handled
 - Telles discusses linkage to point 3. Assess top causes for high risk of removal - What is the need?
 - **2022 Legislative Update from Mike Fonkert**
9. On the child welfare front, **SB 12** (requiring the Kansas Department for Children and Families (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) received a hearing on March 8 in the House Committee on Children and Seniors. SB 12 passed the Senate unanimously on February 17. We support this bill for both its content and for the conversation it continues about accountability for entities that contract with DCF.
 - SB 12 passed both the House and Senate recently, the taskforce supports the implementation of this bill
10. This week, **HB 2468** and **HB 2469**, respectively establishing the foster youth and foster parent bill of rights, will also receive a hearing in the House Committee on Children and Seniors. The hearing will be at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16.
 - Fonkert states both House Bill 2468 and 2469 received hearings in the House committee on children and seniors and they have not advanced out of committee, recommends the groups supports amping up of the Bill of Rights in terms of enshrining it in statute

- **Foster Care System Recommendations**

11. Support changes to foster care system that prevents a youth from experiencing multiple transfers from one foster home to another

- Consensus of group to table 11 because it is active practice

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

- Kennedy states this is already a standard within DCF recommends teaching people how to utilize this and the exceptions process. Taskforce decides to keep recommendation.

13. Fully fund programs before youth are placed in the foster care system, including IDD, support for families in the home, behavior programs, substance abuse programs

- Taskforce is comfortable leaving 13 as a proposed recommendation

- **Foster Care System Recommendations**

14. Support an eco-system that connects community resources, grassroots organizations, advocates, coaches, champions and others with DCF, Law Enforcement, COMCARE, etc.

- a. If we use non-professionals to respond to a Mental Health Crisis they would need to be vetted, and trained in trauma-informed techniques.

- Lewis raises the point that funding prevention programs is a broader overall recommendation and does not belong solely in foster care

- This point will show up in a broader context across all systems: WPD, JIAC, etc.

- **Foster Care System Recommendations**

15. Support for family services that prevent youth from entering the foster care system

- Determined that Recommendation 15 and 13 are essentially the same and can be combined and 15 can be removed.

2. Next week

- Homework review
- Recommendations for WPD + JIAC
- + 911 will be in two-weeks
- Next Meeting April 4, 2022.