

JOIN HANDS FOR CHILDREN
MINUTES FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION ISSUES
April 13, 2010

Committee Members Present: Ken Nichols; Maureen McGrath; Onalee Stewart; Jeanine Livingston; Stacy Heinle (alternate for Gwendolyn Lawson Townsend); Mark Courtney; Debra Ellsworth; Steve Hassett; Patrick Dowd (alternate for Mary Meinig)

Staff Present: Julie Dunnington, Melissa Takade, and Benjamin Berres, Partners for Our Children; Jann Hoppler, DSHS CA

Others: Marna Miller and Stephanie Lee, Washington State Institute of Public Policy; David del Villar Fox, DSHS CA; Trudy Soucoup, Community Youth Services; Danny Howe, Children's Home Society of Washington

Julie Dunnington started the meeting on behalf of Ken Nichols by presenting an overview of the results of the March Child Welfare Transformation Design Committee (CWTDC) meeting. She announced that the Children's Legislative Oversight Committee (CWLOC) desired to meet for a quarterly update, but that the meeting was yet to be scheduled. She also reiterated the two questions that the CWTDC directed toward the legislature after the March meeting. She explained that the co-chairs would ask the legislature whether site selection boundaries must cross-over Regional boundaries. Lastly, she talked about the report owed to the CWTDC in June.

Ken Nichols arrived and welcomed the advisory committee and requested member and audience introductions.

The advisory committee moved to the next agenda item, voting on a new advisory committee co-chair. Julie Dunnington said that Mary O'Brien of Yakima would be taking Marian Harris' place on the Child Welfare Transformation Design Committee, but had not decided which Advisory Committee she wished to participate. Maureen McGrath of Catholic Family and Child Services was elected to be the new co-chair.

The advisory committee shifted to the next topic, a review of the *Domains and Indicators used to Measure Outcomes* document. The advisory committee reviewed suggestions for revision offered during the March CWTDC meeting. The committee also discussed the timeliness of IWCA compliance and whether to add an indicator to the document that measures an educational outcome, beyond what is included in the indicator directing the State to measure National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) outcomes. The committee felt that there are currently too many impediments to immediately include a more robust educational outcome. The advisory committee hoped that, to the extent possible, Washington State would measure these data for potential future inclusion to the outcomes document.

There was also a short discussion on what constitutes a permanent exit when a child runs away from care. There was a request to measure the total number of caseworkers assigned to a case over its life-cycle. The committee said that it would be hard to discern firm conclusions from that data.

The committee voted to accept the *Domains and Indicators used to Measure Outcomes* document and submit it as a component of the June Quarterly Report to the CWLOC.

Next, the committee attended to the issue of creating two separate lists for new cases and case transfers. Mark Courtney asserted that the outcomes the advisory committee just voted on should be the outcomes for all children, including transfers. In terms of measuring outcomes for those different types of cases, the evaluation would focus on different issues, i.e., reunification for children that enter care and a broader indicator for transfer cases such as permanency. The evaluators must also remain cognizant that baselines for new cases and transfer cases are likely to be very different.

There was also a question about tracking foster children who have children while living in the child welfare system. Mark Courtney said that this is a very important issue and that following NYTD outcomes is a first step to understanding these sub-populations.

The advisory committee acknowledged that there would be a number of yet-to-be-defined “trumps” when transferring cases from the public agency to the supervising agency. These are issues that the Site Selection and Transition Issue Advisory Committee will be taking up.

The advisory committee voted unanimously to accept the *Domains and Indicators used to Measure Outcomes* as the outcome indicators that would be applied to all children. They included the caveat that the evaluator must consider that baselines for diverse sub-populations of children are different.

The advisory committee took a brief break.

When the advisory committee reconvened, they began a discussion of its “next steps” between this meeting and the June report to the CWLOC. Some of the ideas discussed included: joint meetings with the Advisory Committee on Financial issues to address incentives, pay points, procedures for contract monitoring, and data systems; and quality of care and process of care outcomes. Mark Courtney suggested that members of the Outcomes Advisory Committee attend the Legal and Practice committee and aid in the creation of a document containing indicators for process of care and quality of care measures. The advisory committee asked the evaluators from the Washington State Institute of Public Policy if there were any “next steps” they could identify for the advisory committee. They felt the advisory committee had sufficiently addressed the key issues.

The advisory committee felt at the end of the meeting that they had sufficiently and satisfactorily addressed the tasks assigned to them and called the meeting to close. Staff will send to committee members a final draft of the *Domains and Indicators used to Measure Outcomes*. They will also let committee members know when joint meetings are to be scheduled.