

FWCC Meeting Notes
7/11/2022

Family Well-Being Community Collaborative

Mission: Collaborate to keep families safely together and supported in their communities and to radically reduce inequities within the child welfare court system.

New Member Introductions

- Caitlin O’Hea, new DCYF Family Time Program Manager, introduced herself.

Discussion: Changing FWCC Meeting Schedule

- Steve Grilli was unable to attend today’s meeting. Conversation about “Discussion: Changing FWCC Meeting Schedule” postponed.

Announcement

- Kelly sent out an announcement on behalf of Erinn Havig regarding a DCYF request for application for Family Resource Centers. DCYF is encouraging participation from a wide range of community partners. Brief letter of intent to apply due today, 7/11/2022.

Harm of Removal Conversation

- Continuing from the harm of removal information provided at the last FWCC meeting, conversation about how we assess harm of removal in the court context. HB 1227 requires a balancing test – safety threats in the home vs. harm of removal to the child.
 - Monique Mitchell: What Every Judge and Attorney Needs to Know about the Trauma of Removal – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_DJ04mfpJI.
 - Kansas City Star: Taken into Foster Care, Through the Eyes of a Child – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gb8BGKqVVZM>.
- Jacob D’Annunzio shared the idea of bringing together experts to have a conversation about harm of removal, identify key indicators, and develop a tool for Washington judicial officers.
 - Goals for expert conversation/fishbowl:
 - What information can help the system identify harms of removal?
 - Identify themes and specific questions to ask.
 - Potential experts to invite:
 - Dee Wilson
 - Monique Mitchell
 - Bruce Perry
 - Delilah Bruskas
 - Mark Courtney
 - Options for funding needed:
 - Title IV-E funding
 - Children’s Justice Task Force
 - Chafee Funds – Passion to Action
- Ideas generated and responses from the group:
 - DCYF is doing some work internally on this issue.
 - Consider framing the conversation as balancing harm of removal and harm of not removing – and reviewing this frequently throughout a case.
 - Tools exist to assess some kinds of harm (emotional impact), but the challenge is gathering the information in time for the decision.

- Need to include the experience and knowledge of people with lived expertise.
 - Consider having lived experts respond to the ideas generated by the subject matter expert group.
 - Need diversity for lived experts and researchers (note: Monique Mitchell and Delilah Bruskas have lived experience).
- FWCC mission reminds us to address racial equity.
 - DCYF recently released a study on [Examination of the Racial Disparities Present in Child Welfare Assessment of Safety](#).
 - Incorporate findings in our recommendations.
- Addressing confusion about filing and removal:
 - Judicial officers offered that social workers need to understand that filing a dependency is a separate analysis from removing a child – training is needed.
 - Question was posed – why would a social worker file a dependency if they aren’t going to remove the child?
 - Is an in-home dependency basically an opportunity for family surveillance – when the system lacks enough evidence of a threat to remove a child?
 - Responses included:
 - Court oversight can be an encouragement for a parent to participate in services.
 - Court involvement, with assignment of an attorney and oversight of DCYF by the court, can sometimes level the playing field for a parent who doesn’t trust DCYF. Perhaps impact would be even greater if parents received an attorney prior to filing.
 - There are times when a family cannot access services without a dependency filed; that would be a reason to file a dependency but not remove the kids.
 - NCJFCJ’s national study from a few years ago found in 1/3 of child welfare removal cases, children were removed and returned within 30 days. Matt Orme, from AOC’s Washington State Center for Court Research, reviewed this using state data. Kelly will ask Matt about his findings and share at the next FWCC meeting.
- FWCC focus on upstream work:
 - Important ideas about preventing dependency involvement were raised and are part of the FWCC mission.
 - Think of Us is conducting qualitative research about CPS investigations. Emily Stochel offered to share findings when they are available.
 - Parents for Parents – supporting families upstream. King County is already doing this.

Work Session – Workgroup members and interested FWCC members joined one of the two featured workgroups. More information is available at each Workgroup’s webpage as follows (click on the “Workgroup HUB” button at the following links for additional information):

- [Ex Parte Removal](#) Workgroup
- [Removal & Placement Decisions](#) Workgroup

Action Items:

- Kelly will ask Matt Orme about 30-day return findings and share at the next FWCC meeting.
- Think of Us is conducting qualitative research about CPS investigations. Emily Stochel offered to share findings when they are available.

Next Meeting – August 8, 2022, 12-1:30pm.