

## Trend Analysis Committee Meeting

# PLACEMENT STABILITY

Date: Friday, February 22, 2008, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Location: Child and Family Services Office, Spanish Fork  
(607 E. Kirby Lane, Spanish Fork, 801-794-6700)  
In attendance: Aude-Bermond Hamlet, Beverly Hart, Carol Miller, Jane Lewis, Jeff Harrop, Judy Hull, Judy Miller, Katy Larsen, Kelly Peterson, Ken McCauley, Kevin Jackson, Linda Wininger, Navina Forsythe, Patti VanWagoner, Phyllis Lee (by phone), Tanya Albormoz, Tonya Myrup, Trish Jensen

### Meeting Notes

#### **Introductions and presentation of our topic. (Aude Bermond-Hamlet)**

*Introductions were made. Along with committee members, Resource Family Consultants (RFCs) from most regions were present for today's meeting. Kelly Peterson from the Utah Foster Care Foundation (UFCF) was also in attendance. The Trend Analysis Committee meets on a quarterly basis. Placement stability is one of the priority focus areas for Child and Family Services, so we dedicated the entire day to reviewing information around placement stability. The QCRs include placement stability, and our scores have been taking a dip. We are also in the period of the data pull for the 2009 Federal review. Our on-site visits have been scheduled for August 2009. Placement stability is a challenge for our agency, and is a very complex problem.*

#### **What is the current data telling us about placement stability? Utah vs. other states? Who disrupts? (Navina Forsythe)**

*We are not performing well in placement stability compared to other states. We need to focus on reducing the number of "bad" moves for the children we serve. Western Region performs best on this measure. It may be because they have more RFCs for longer periods of time, with lower caseloads. Western Region used to have more available homes, but that isn't the case anymore. The culture of Western Region may*

also help with placement stability. Navina gave the following handouts to the group for review and discussion.

- *Permanency Composite 4—Placement Stability.* This data pull includes three measures.
- *Number and Percent of Placement Termination Reasons.* This handout provides information of reasons why placements terminate, by each region. The biggest reason for all regions appears to be “Moved to Foster from Shelter”.
- *Number of Providers, Number of Available Openings, Number Without Children.*
- *Resource Families Preference.*
- *Regional Lists of Resource Families.* There appears to be duplicates in these data, so Navina will see about correcting this information.

**Navina will provide the following additional data:**

- *The ages of the children.*
- *When a move occurs due to caregiver request, broken down by caregivers.*
- *Length of retention of foster families.*
- *Send Navina an email if you would like to see other information.*

Navina and her team are willing to provide training to the RFCs on the data reports available through SAFE.

Tanya has received approval for a respite care workgroup. One of their goals is to provide more respite to families to help preserve placements. She is also planning to meet with all RFCs in the next few months.

It was suggested that we explore options of recruiting families that are willing to provide all types of services (shelter care, foster care, respite, etc.).

Workers may need training on selecting placement termination reasons. There are definitions in SAFE, so we can distribute that information to all staff.

**Patti VanWagoner, Child and Family Services deputy director, shares what the Breakthrough Collaborative Series (BCS) has done on retention of resource families and on kinship placements.**

*Casey Family Programs sponsors the BCS, with several states included in the project. The way a BCS works it that a pilot site is identified, data is identified and reviewed, and small areas are targeted for action. This is a great opportunity for states to share what is working well for them. We were involved in one focusing on placement stability, including placement recruitment and retention of resource families. Items around placement stability that work for other states:*

- *Recognizing informal supports for families. (We received grant funds for statewide cluster groups.) This should be part of the initial consultation with families and into the homestudy process.*
- *Placement of youth and the youth having a say in where they are going. We are working on a youth assessment to help with this information.*
- *Involve the biological family and the caregiving family upfront. There is a component included in pre-service training.*
- *Experienced resource families are our best recruiting tools. UFCF has “Ambassadors” who serve in this function.*
- *One of our challenges is that other states do their own recruiting, training, and retention of foster families. We have a team of three different agencies working together on this item. Each region needs to look at how their teams are working together.*

*Another BSC we were involved in was focused on kinship care. Northern Region was our pilot site as they experienced most disruptions from kinship care. We still struggle with this and are still working on this issue.*

- *Education and supports for kinship families is needed.*
- *Utah has different dynamics than other states, and we noticed that we lack informal supports for kincaregivers.*
- *We need to look at how we can support practice that is beneficial. The upfront evaluation and assessment needs to be strengthened so kincaregivers understand what caring for a kin child will entail.*
- *Legislation is being proposed that will allow us to provide “preliminary placements” that will give us time to perform more thorough assessments.*

- *Understanding and providing the amount of informal supports needed for any family providing care needs to be a priority for us. Looking at resources and grant funds and how we utilize them can be a focus point for us.*

**Katy Larsen, Community Development Manager, shares what the Congregate Settings workgroup is working on.**

*Child and Family Services is looking at what we have been doing and what we want to do with our congregate care settings. The goals were to reduce populations and length of stay for children in those settings. The workgroup has researched what other states have been doing, and many presenters have attended and provided information. There isn't much information available about congregate care settings and the impact on children. Useful information:*

- *Nevada: Enough funding for available space for children. Personalized agreements for each child. Pay double the daily rate for the first 90 days. Katy has asked Nevada for outcome data when it is available. Kelly commented that they have worked really hard not to make foster care look like a job so people aren't motivated by money.*
- *San Diego: Similar shelter facility to ours. Focus on younger children. CPS calls RFCs first, and a team comes together at the very beginning (Western Region follows this pattern). Extra respite and community supports. A specific facility for children who can't be placed immediately, but it is limited to a 24-hour stay.*
- *Chicago: Privately owned system for children who can return to their homes. Voluntary system with a large network of homes that will take the children and work with the families for no money. Children remain in parents' custody.*
- *Youth Law Center (Carol Schaffer) shared that their main concern is for children under six years old. Other items are: policy about how often a review occurs when children are in these settings; better respite for foster families, with the focus on planned activities for the children; recruit differently for "shelter" and "mentor" homes.*

**The practice improvement coordinators and resource family consultants of each region briefly share what their region is doing to help improve placement stability, what's working, what's not, and what their needs are.**

*Western:*

- *RFC at shelter.*
- *Retaining RFCs.*
- *Culture of region.*

*Northern:*

- *Transitional therapist at Christmas Box House.*
- *RFCs assigned to specific teams and involved upfront.*
- *RFCs call new placements within the first few days.*
- *Clinical on-call team (six-month trial basis).*
- *Respite placements, when available.*
- *Utilizing time once a 10-day notice is received.*

*Eastern:*

- *Helpful caseworkers per foster parents.*
- *Increased supports to foster parents.*
- *Creative (crisis) intervention specialists in each area of the region.*
- *Not working well is court punishing youth by sending them to detention, and other problematic court orders.*
- *Need more local foster families.*
- *Three RFCs responsible for being the single entry point for placing children; monthly contact with foster families; work with RFCs in other regions.*
- *Focus on preventing placement disruptions (staffing, caseworker awareness, etc.).*
- *Teenagers disrupt more often when placed out of the region.*

*Salt Lake Valley (provided handout "Common Themes/Reasons for Placement Disruptions"):*

- *Neighborhoods focusing on disruptions.*
- *Homestudy perspective (additional training, denials when necessary, etc.).*
- *Child-specific concerns are brought to a committee instead of being sent to Licensing (kinship staffing form).*
- *Placement committee identified common themes for disruption: sibling groups, new families, prior disruptive families. These groups are assigned clinical support at placement committee.*

- *Clinical support team (three RFCs) for possible disruptions.*
  - *Developing assessment tool for possible disruptions and other tools for caseworkers (denial checklists).*
  - *Disruption staffings.*
  - *Utilize handout “Resource Families – Characteristics and Traits of Successful Placements”.*
  - *Looking at developing ongoing support groups.*
  - *Recommend that we come up with a way to review **all** disruptions.*
- Southwest (information provided by Sam Syphrett):*
- *Report: r\_scf\_op\_plmt\_count in SCF.pbl, with a placement count of two is reviewed every month with a focus on possible placement disruptions and the goal of developing a plan to address any possible placement disruptions. This has been very helpful.*
  - *Our region follows our placement stability plan.*

**Discussion with Kelly Peterson from the UFCF about how the recruitment and training of foster families may help improve placement stability.**

*Kelly gave a background and history of the UFCF. Currently:*

- *They also use the handout “Resource Families – Characteristics and Traits of Successful Placements”.*
- *Pre-screening with families through an in-the-home initial consultation.*
- *Once invited to training, due process begins because they have been given a licensing application.*
- *Recruitment message is to strengthen a family by becoming a foster/adoptive family (reaching the right audience).*
- *Classes are so in-depth and extensive on types and behaviors of children that some people self-select out of the process during training.*
- *Thirty-two hours of training, trying to capture all aspects of providing foster care are taught as an overview so families can make an informed decision as to whether they truly want to become foster/adoptive parents.*
- *Many times, children aren’t placed in homes for six to nine months after training is completed because the family must wait to become licensed by the Office of Licensing and then be approved by Child and Family Services placement approval committees. After the*

*family is licensed, the UFCF provides in-service training required for annual licensing renewal.*

- *Placement stability is constantly addressed through the training.*
- *Emotional aspect of providing foster care cannot be trained but is learned with experience. Support of the families after placement is critical for their success.*
- *The UFCF train all kinship families, but do not recruit them.*
- *Although there are many families who do not renew their license each year due to adoption and other personal reasons, the UFCF has been able to continue to recruit and train additional families to replace those leaving.*
- *Looking at processing families more quickly and being able to have more trainers.*
- *For the next six months, they will ask at the first of each class how many are willing to be available 24/7. **(Kelly will share this information when she has it compiled.)***
- *Cluster groups are available for foster parents; provide ideas for in-service training; RFCs attend training to offer their services; family-to-family approach to provide child care for cluster groups. **(Kelly will check to see if this is working.)***
- *Still struggle with recruiting and retaining foster families.*
- *Child and Family Services and UFCF meet quarterly to brainstorm around improving the system.*

**Summarize what we know impacts placement stability; brainstorm and select solutions to address placement stability on a regional and statewide level.**

- *Pay for child care for clusters and day care for foster parents, or make sure the family has a plan for these items.*
- *Look at what assessments are used for “First placement, best placement” and how this is working for different areas.*
- *Identify children who have experienced a disruption to help match them to an appropriate placement.*
- *Utilize people who don’t qualify for placement as peer parents, to serve on Quality Improvement Committees (QICs), etc.*
- *Look at data by age groups to better understand what groups of children are disrupting most often.*

- *Utah is one of the states with the lowest pay for foster families, but this doesn't seem to affect disruptions when looking at other states' data.*
- *Look to see if the "0 to 3" program is working (Tonya will be looking at this in her new position as of March 3).*
- *Availability of placements correlates with affecting placement disruptions in national studies.*
- *Each region will continually look at their placement stability plan per our priority focus area action plan – Tanya will get with each region to review this information.*
- *Identify risk factors of families for disruptions.*
- *Look at trauma history and functional level of children.*
- *Provide incentives for foster families who have fewer disruptions.*
- *Identify shelter families that can be long-term foster families.*

*The Trend Analysis Committee cannot only look at placement stability. Other groups can take some of these issues: Respite care workgroup, congregate care workgroup, RFC committee, etc. These groups will make recommendations for practice improvement. Linda and Tanya will see if they need to convene a placement stability committee.*

**Next meeting:**

**The next Trend Analysis Committee meeting will be held on May 6, 2008 from 10am to 12pm at the DHS Administration Building.**