

2020

Department of Child Safety Community  
Advisory Committee Report of Activities and  
Recommendations for State Fiscal Year 2020

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Revised 8-2020

### BACKGROUND

The Community Advisory Committee was established June 2015 by A.R.S. §8-459, to provide a community forum with the following purpose:

1. to inform the Department, analyze current law and policy and make recommendations to improve the ability of the Department to increase the safety of children, respond to child maltreatment and ensure the well-being of and timely permanency for children who are referred to and involved in the child welfare system;
2. for collaboration among state, local, community, tribal, public and private stakeholders in child welfare programs and services that are administered by the Department; and
3. to improve communication between mandatory reporters and the Department.



Additionally, the Community Advisory Committee serves as one of several Citizen Review Panels for the Department, as required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The full list of Citizen Review Panels can be found at <https://dcs.az.gov/about/community-advisory-committee>.

The Community Advisory Committee includes one representative from each of fourteen stakeholder groups. The Committee's membership includes:

<b>ARIZONA DCS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP</b>	
<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>NAME/AFFILIATION OF REPRESENTATIVE</b>
Child welfare agencies that directly provide contracted services to children and their families	Jacob Schmitt, MPA, President/CEO, Arizona's Children Association
Child advocacy organizations that deal with child welfare system policy issues	Bahney Dedolph, Deputy Director, Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
Current or former foster or adoptive parent	Jennifer Huber, PhD, former foster parent and adoptive parent
Medical providers, with a preference for pediatricians, who have experience in diagnosing and treating injuries related to abuse and neglect	Cody Conklin-Aguilera, MD., FAAP, Medical Director, Department of Public Health Yavapai County, Pediatric Program Manager, Verde Valley
Volunteers with the foster care review board or Court Appointed Special Advocate program	Robin Pearson, Executive Director, Voices for CASA Children
Persons with an academic appointment to a state university who conduct research in child welfare services, child maltreatment or child abuse or neglect	Judy Krysik, PhD., MSW, Associate Professor, Arizona State University School of Social Work, Director Center for Child Well-Being
The courts, the representative must be involved in child welfare issues	Nicole Roskens, LPC, Clinical Director, Cradle to Crayons Program, Superior Court of Maricopa County Juvenile Division, and Independent Private Practice, Counselor
A rural area in this state who has experience in the child welfare system	Rita Wright, LMSW, Assistant Clinical Professor, Child Welfare Training Project Coordinator, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Northern Arizona University
A Native American tribe or nation who has experience in the child welfare system	Elisa Manuel, President, Three Precious Miracles

**ARIZONA DCS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (CONTINUED)**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>NAME/AFFILIATION OF REPRESENTATIVE</b>
A child advocacy organization that advocates for or represents children who are victims of crime.	Peter Gentala, J.D., Chair, General Counsel and Vice President for Government Affairs and Public Policy with Childhelp; Board member, Arizona Child and Family Advocacy Network
Persons who have experience with children with special needs and the child welfare system	Soncerea Swift, foster parent, social worker
A law enforcement agency. The representative must have experience with the Department on cases that involve criminal conduct allegations	Sergeant Matthew Lawes, Mesa Police Department
Schools. The representative must have experience in the child welfare system	Deborah Burdick, Ed.D, Superintendent, Cave Creek Unified School District
A faith-based organization. The representative must have experience in the child welfare system	Mark Upton, President/CEO Christian Family Care
Retired 9-1-2019	Emily Jenkins, Prior Chair, President/CEO Arizona Council of Human Service Providers, Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
Retired 10/11/2019	Kay Ekstrom, Founder, Retired CEO, Christian Family Care
Resigned 10/21/2019	Berdette Carrasco, RN
Resigned 8/1/2019	Tiffany Gavazzo

As required by A.R.S. §8-459, representatives were appointed by the Director of the Department of Child Safety and did not receive compensation for their service on the Committee. The statutory requirements of the Committee are to meet at least quarterly and produce a report of Committee activities and recommendations each fiscal year.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee met in SFY 2020 to receive information about current laws and policies, and to review data relevant to the Committee’s three statutory requirements. In addition to the call to public and option for executive session, the meeting agendas included a variety of topics aimed at educating and informing the members. An archive of the Committee meetings, including material presented at the meetings can be accessed at the following web page:

<https://dcs.az.gov/about/community-advisory-committee>.

In accordance with A.R.S. §8-459, the Committee has summarized several key activities and recommendations that came from the five meetings held in SFY 2020. The final meeting of SFY 2020 (June) was used to finalize the annual report. The activities and recommendations are organized into the three areas for which the Committee is charged with providing a community forum.

**MEETING #1: AUGUST 16, 2019**

## Activities and Actions

- **Call for Public Comments**

The Committee allowed public comment. Each comment was limited to two minutes. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.01(H), the committee did not act on any public comment, only on matters listed on the agenda.
- **Shared Parenting or Co-Parenting**

Committee member Nicole Roskens presented on shared parenting; the committee recommended her presentation be posted on the website. Ms. Roskens defined shared parenting as a supportive positive relationship between birth parents and alternative care givers such as foster parents. The project on supporting shared parenting in Maricopa County began in May 2018 with the purpose of increasing caregivers who interact with birth parents and support reunification; increasing awareness of trauma across the system and increasing support for shared parenting. A readiness assessment for shared parenting was conducted with interdisciplinary stakeholders. The Committee is devising parameters for shared parenting. Committee members discussed the continuum of shared parenting activities, bias toward birth parents, and recruiting foster parents who are open to shared parenting and training for such.
- **Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and the Impact on Committee Sectors**

The Chair, Emily Jenkins, encouraged Committee members to consider the FFPSA and how it will impact the sector that they represent in an effort to make sure the Department and community are ready to work together on planning and implementation. Over the remainder of the year, Committee members will be asked to present on what should to be addressed from the perspective of each sector.

  1. The Committee recommended that the structure of the 2019/2020 Committee meetings be focused on the Family First Prevention Services Act implementation plan and the DCS Strategic Plan. Observations and ideas from the Committee members' sectors around these two plans would help guide meetings and decision making.
  2. The Committee recommended that the agenda for the Committee meetings would:
    - A. Include a basic yearly plan with pre-determined sector updates and an open opportunity for timely information.
    - B. Allow for public comments after major agenda items were complete but prior to setting the agenda for the next meeting.
    - C. Include the revised statement to the public regarding Call for Public Comments.
    - D. Include an agenda item after the Welcome and Introductions to review recommendations from the previous meeting.
  3. The Committee recommended future agenda items to include:
    - A. Explore the relationship between domestic violence victims and the child welfare system.
    - B. Summary of DCS legislative activity in the past session and plans for going forward. (Potentially in the December meeting)
- **Transition of Committee Chair**

The current Committee Chair, Emily Jenkins, announced her retirement. The Committee unanimously elected Mr. Peter Gentala as the new Committee Chair.

**MEETING #2: OCTOBER 4, 2019**

## Activities and Actions

- **Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Implementation Plan**  
Robert Navarro, Assistant Director of Budget and Finance, presented on the DCS Strategic Plan and FFPSA. According to Mr. Navarro, there are two major components of the Act: 1. federally reimbursable costs under Title IV-E for maintenance payments for children in congregate care and, 2. prevention services. Maintenance will be limited for children in congregate care placements and will no longer be reimbursed on the 15th day of congregate care unless children are living in a specialized facility, e.g., placement for victims of sex trafficking, or a substance abuse treatment facility with a parent, or QRTP (qualified residential treatment program). Arizona DCS will delay implementation of the Act– only four states are going live on October 1, 2019. DCS is working on expanding its placement array and evolving its service array for prevention services to expand the reach of those programs and examine IV-E reimbursable expenditures. Mr. Navarro emphasized that prevention services are not inclusive of primary prevention; the children have to be reasonable candidates meaning without the services they would otherwise be entering foster care. He reported that the Department owes a detailed plan to the AZ legislature by January 2, 2020, which will expand on the areas discussed in his presentation. DCS is working on additional training/compensation for foster parents to meet the needs of children with significant needs. Group homes will be incentivized to work with licensing agencies to transition children to foster care, a less restrictive living option.
- **DCS Strategic Plan**  
Katherine Guffey, Chief Quality Improvement Officer, answered questions on the DCS Strategic Plan. The SFY 2020 Strategic Plan has been released and is on the DCS website. Some of the goals on the plan are long term projects that are continuing –e.g., integration of behavioral health and IT system update. FFPSA is aligned with the values of the strategic plan.
- **Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and the Impact on Committee Sectors**  
Bahney Dedolph will invite a presentation from the Child Welfare League of America for the next meeting to discuss changes to the FFPSA Act. Judy Krysik will present on the Act from the research sector at the next meeting.
- **Call for Public Comment**  
The committee allowed public comment – none received.

**MEETING #3: DECEMBER 6, 2019**

## Activities and Action

- **New Members Welcomed**  
Jacob Schmitt and Mark Upton
- **Child Welfare League of America presentation by John Sciamanna**  
Under the FFPSA Act, states can provide prevention services to children/families for up to 12 months without regard to income eligibility. The child has to be a candidate for foster care – this means a child at imminent risk of entering foster care, and this is left up to the states to define. A child in foster care who is pregnant or parenting is also included for prevention services as is post adoption services, and guardianship/kinship arrangements. Evidence is reviewed to classify programs as promising, supported, and well-supported by the Title IV-E Clearinghouse. This Clearinghouse is new and provides rankings of programs on the evidence-based continuum. The Act does not address issues such as housing, poverty, etc. and it is known that the issues faced by child welfare involved families are complex.

- FFSPA from the perspective of research by Dr. Judy Krysik  
Important research questions related to the new Act include: What are the outcomes of the congregate care programs for specialized populations? How do we define reasonable candidacy – narrow or a broader definition that would include more children? How do we develop the level of evidence on prevention programs? How do we meet workforce concerns? What is the Department's role in legislative advocacy for primary prevention that is not included in the Act—e.g., reducing abusive head trauma, better educational outcomes for children in care, safety education and social emotional learning in schools, prevention regarding mental health/suicidal ideation, disproportionate outcomes for LGBTQ population/racial disparities? How do we best engage families in prevention services? Programs on the IV-E Clearinghouse list may need to be adapted for cultural considerations and to address complex issues families encounter.
- Legislative Update  
Bills from the previous session were reviewed as well as one agency bill from 2020 regarding substantiating reports for substance exposed newborns.
- The Committee scheduled meeting dates for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2020 to include February 7, 2020; April 3, 2020; and June 5, 2020
- Call for Public Comment  
The committee allowed public comment. No public comment was received.
- Set Agenda for Next Meeting  
The Committee recommends that the next meeting agenda include a report on Domestic Violence with Doreen Nicholas, a report by the Auditor General's office on Foster Care, and an education sector presentation.

#### **MEETING #4: FEBRUARY 7, 2020**

##### Activities and Actions

- Domestic Violence and Child Welfare  
Presentation by Doreen Nicholas of the Arizona Coalition of Domestic and Sexual Violence. Ms. Nicholas reported that a lot of information in the DCS Practice Guidelines was pulled from the program Safe and Together, a program that the Coalition supports. The Coalition has been doing training on domestic violence for DCS staff for 18 years – the training was previously two days and is now 3 ½ hours. In the past, they also had collocated domestic violence advocates with child welfare. Ms. Nicholas discussed root causes of domestic violence. DCS Advanced Academy training for DCS includes information on how to case plan with a perpetrator parent and safety resources for victim parents.
- A Special Report of the Arizona Department of Child Safety  
Foster Care, Licensure, Use, and Retention by the Arizona Auditor General by Gillian Vanasse, Assistant Director for Foster Care and Post Permanency Supports. Ms. Vanasse reviewed the findings and recommendations from the report and current efforts by DCS to respond, e.g., expansion of warm line for foster parents, placement packet with new placements, and new supports in contract for children with significant behavioral health needs. Ms. Vanasse reported that DCS is placing more attention on shared parenting. DCS instituted regular secret shopper calls in English and Spanish to monitor customer service and conduct regular checking of information on the website. Targeted ads on social media have helped to recruit families to become licensed foster parents. It is estimated that about 1,200 foster care beds are needed statewide, the need is particularly strong in the area of older children and sibling groups. The new foster care licensing agency contracts that were processed in September 2019 will be monitored for outcomes. Guardian, the new DCS information system will have a foster parent portal.

- Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and the Impact on Education, K – 12 in Arizona Schools by Committee member Dr. Deborah Burdick
- Educators consider a positive focus of the Act is prevention versus intervention, which minimizes child trauma and has a positive capacity on student learning. The focus on prevention should also keep children out of congregate care, which is positive because placement in congregate care often means a move in school and disrupts the child socially and educationally. Social emotional curricula done in schools supports children. Dr. Burdick asked who prepares unlicensed kinship caregivers to parent the children, will there be enough funds to adequately implement the Act, and where will the staff come from for the new prevention service programs?
- Call for Public Comment  
The committee allowed public comment. One written public comment was received and pertained to a specific DCS case, thus it was not discussed to maintain confidentiality.
- Set Agenda for Next Meeting
  1. The Committee recommends that at the April meeting there be an agenda item to work on the process for the annual report.
  2. The Committee recommends that the April meeting also include the previously requested presentations:
    - A. DCS present to the Committee on DCS’s progress on Shared Parenting initiatives.
    - B. DCS provide clarification and an update on the local Arizona DCS plans for the Family First Prevention Services Act.
  3. The Committee recommends that the April meeting also include a presentation by Committee Chair Peter Gentala regarding Child Advocacy Centers and child welfare.
  4. The Committee requests an overview of the progress of the current legislative session and the major legislative pieces that are available. Committee members are encouraged to provide feedback to DCS on specific bills of interest.

Regarding future Committee meetings:

1. The Committee recommends that a future agenda item be a review of the mission and role as well as the effectiveness of the Committee.
2. The Committee also requests a presentation be provided on the status of the 5-year lawsuit against DCS that is currently being litigated in Federal Court. The presentation could include progress of the lawsuit and the impact of potential outcomes in Arizona.

## MEETING #5: APRIL 3, 2020

### Activities and Actions

- Meeting held through video conferencing  
In order to protect public health and safety during the Covid-19 pandemic, the committee met through video conferencing technology.
- The DCS Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic by DCS Director, Mike Faust  
Director Faust explained how DCS was responding to the pandemic including 1. Stay on mission and engage with children and families to achieve safety and permanency, 2. Implementation of virtual visitation on March 19, 2020, extended



to April 30, 2020, and 3. Parenting time also moved to virtual with options dependent on the technology available. DCS will continue to do in home preservation for safe and unsafe children. DCS will continue to allow for skill building and counseling by telehealth. The volume to the Hotline is down currently, a concern when vulnerable children are not in the public eye. Child welfare personnel are first responders and need to be treated as such. The DCS website has communication to all stakeholders – staff, care providers, birth families, etc. DCS set up a system for distribution of goods, delivering diapers, food, beds, protective masks, etc. Director Faust stated that DCS needs to hear issues coming to the community and help in problem solving.

- Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and the impact on Child Advocacy Centers in Arizona by Michelle Katona Genaro, Childhelp  
Child Advocacy Centers are one-stop service centers for victims (child and adult) who need support. They include law enforcement, child welfare, behavioral health, victim advocates and other services including medical. There are 19 such centers serving children in Arizona. Each county is required to have a joint investigation protocol that clarifies responsibilities and limits the number of interviews a child has to go through when they are allegedly abused or neglected. Arizona has a mandated reporting statute that initiates investigations. Funding sources for the child advocacy centers include, for example, the federal Victims of Crime Act, Office of the Victims of Crime grant, and the state Medicaid program/ CMDP. Not all advocacy centers offer a clinical services component or adult services. Childhelp Children's Center is co-located with their partners to ensure a coordinated response. Cases are reviewed through a multidisciplinary team. The Childhelp Center receives donations from the public.
- Update on the BK vs Snyder/Faust Class Action Litigation by Rob Ellman, Attorney representing DCS  
The lawsuit against DCS is focused on medical/dental/behavioral health care and investigations and was filed by Children's Rights Inc. with the goal to obtain court control over child welfare matters. Under a lawsuit, DCS would be overseen by a panel of monitors, with final authority by a judge. DCS challenged the class action certification and it was denied. The case is now in the pretrial motion stage, and DCS is preparing for a bench trial.
- Call for Public Comment  
Because of the Covid-19 pandemic the Committee did not allow agenda time for public comment for this meeting.
- Set Agenda for Next Meeting  
Compile annual report.

#### Committee Recommendations for DCS for state fiscal year 2020

1. The Committee recommended that the Department produce additional information on the ages of children on runaway status, and if possible, to publish the information on the DCS website. Information will include a definition distinguishing between runaway and missing, and clarification on what is included and excluded in the data reported. If the information is not published, it will be provided to the Committee.
2. Regarding the presentation on shared parenting - the Committee recommended that the Department work with licensing agencies to promote a similar message regarding support and protocol in favor of shared parenting.



3. Regarding the presentation Family First Prevention and Services Act implementation – Investing in family services prevention activities under Title IV-E, the Committee recommends:
  - A. DCS explore locally what opportunities around Family Finding are possible to ensure appropriate kinship care that will better support the investment in prevention services for children at “imminent risk.”
  - B. DCS examine services and programs in the FFPSA Clearinghouse to assess whether or not they work for our community, including consulting with experts in the service areas.
  - C. That the Legislature consider increasing funding to DCS for training and implementation of Well Supported programs/practices to ensure fidelity of the models.
  - D. DCS advocate for additional services/programs be added to the Clearinghouse for all service areas including Domestic Violence, Housing and Poverty.
  - E. DCS continue to advocate for primary prevention dollars to address the gap between intervention and prevention.
  - F. DCS provide clarification and an update to the Committee on local Arizona DCS plans including:
    - i. Arizona specific plans as they relate to the federal Act.
    - ii. Information on the Arizona current rate for prevention services (50% match).
    - iii. Reporting on reasonable candidates (definitions and numbers).
    - iv. Volume of reports received.
    - v. How they will work to understand the impact of prevention statewide for Arizona.
4. Regarding the presentation: Family First Prevention Services Act: University perspective, the Committee recommends:
  - A. DCS provide updates to the Committee regarding DCS progress on Shared Parenting initiatives. The Committee recommends that the Department develops measurable data concerning a shared parenting initiative and its impact on permanency.
  - B. DCS advocate for an approach that looks at programs that are systematic approaches that adapt for culture and combine evidenced based programs/approaches for better results such as Cradle to Crayons.
5. Regarding the presentation: Domestic Violence and Child Welfare, The Committee recommends a presentation in the future from DCS regarding their implementation of the new Family First Prevention Services Act as it relates to domestic violence. The presentation should include the research behind each of the programs in the service array and the direction DCS is planning. The Committee recommends:
  - A. DCS implement training of DCS supervisors on domestic violence in addition to case managers to ensure case managers are better supported in their execution of responsibilities.
  - B. DCS provide evidence-based perpetrator services.

6. Regarding the presentation: A special report of the Arizona Department of Child Safety – Foster Care, Licensure, Use, and Retention by the Arizona Auditor General. The Committee recommends:
  - A. A formal look at the Workbook for the Foster and Adoptive Services contract including a stakeholder meeting to gather feedback.
  - B. DCS consider an active foster care parent panel as part of a training component for DCS supervisors.
  - C. That when a child is leaving a home that a closing survey be completed by the foster family/home and that the closing survey documentation be provided to the new home so the new family understands the story of the child. The closing survey could be included in the placement packet that goes with the child.
7. Regarding the presentation: Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and the Impact on Education, K-12 in Arizona schools the Committee recommends that DCS:
  - A. Provide an opportunity for educators to regularly have input on what they observe in the educational setting related to specific children. The DCS case manager would work directly with schools to receive one-way communication in a simple method that values the educator’s role in case management. This effort would be a step towards improving collaboration among systems and to providing wrap around services to children.
8. The Committee recommends that it be continued as a statutory committee.