



DCF 56 Advisory Council Meeting - MINUTES

2/21/2024 12:00pm to 2:00pm

DCF Staff			
Name	Present	Name	Present
John Elliott		Elaine Pridgen	
Emily Erickson		Jennifer Sailer	X
Dana Johnson	X	Britny Smuk	X
Shelby McCulley		Kristie Buwalda	X
Shannon Braden		Jay Warner	X
Jonathan Wilcoxon		Chuck Stephens	X
Lauren Washington			

Steering Committee Members (not required to be in attendance for this meeting)				
Member	Present	Nominating Organization	Agency Employed	Area of Expertise
Lisa Broll		Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA)	Walworth County Department of Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Emily Coddington		Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA)	Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA)	Child Welfare
Jill Collins		Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS)	Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS)	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Deanna Collins		Forest County Potawatomi Tribe	Forest County Potawatomi Tribe	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Brent Ruehlow		WCHSA	Jefferson County Department of Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Mechele Shipman		WAFCA	ANU Family Services	Private Child Placing Agency



Advisory Council Members				
Member	Present	Nominating Organization	Agency Employed	Area of Expertise
Kristen Agentin	X	Public Adoptions	Children's Wisconsin	Foster Care and Adoptions
Patty Baker	X	Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS)	Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS)	Child Welfare Training
Cassandra Eggert	X	WCHSA	Outagamie County Human Services Department	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Laura Goba	X	WAFCA	Children's Wisconsin	Private Child Placing Agency
Katlyn Graebner	X	WCHSA	Green County Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Kate Gravel		WCHSA	Dane County Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Laura Halonen-Schultz	X	DMCPS	Wellpoint	Congregate Care Facilities and Services
Allison Higgins		WAFCA	Foundations for Healthy Transitional Living	Private Child Placing Agency
Julie Kay	X	Forest County Potawatomi Tribe	Forest County Potawatomi Tribe	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Andrea Leaman	X	DMCPS	Children's Wisconsin	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Michelle Jones Lim	X	WCHSA	Waukesha County Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Tracy Schumacher		WCHSA	Forest County Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Brittany Shellenberger	X	WCHSA	Winnebago County Health and Human Services	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care



Julie Zidek		Public Adoptions	Lutheran Social Services	Foster Care and Adoptions
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Other Attendees: Karla Meyer

AGENDA

- (12:00-12:05) I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions
- (12:05-12:25) II. DCF 56 Rule Revisions – 56.10 Hearings
- (12:25-1:00) III. DCF 56 Rule Revisions – 56.12 Handbook
- (1:00-1:05) IV. Break
- (1:05-1:30) V. DCF 56 Rule Revisions – 56.15 Supervising Agency
- (1:30-1:55) IV. Next Steps
- (2:00) IV. Adjourn

MEETING NOTES

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions (Dana/Kristie)

- a. Roll call taken and introductions made

II. DCF 56 Rule Revisions – 56.10

Is there anything amiss with the current appeal process?

- a. Few denials, most foster care coordinators work with foster parents to withdraw or counsel out if they feel they will be denied.
- b. Having a tool that walks you through step by step and the support plan process would be very helpful, perhaps as handout.
- c. Would appreciate some type of desk guide because it is not a regular part of practice; timeline, flow chart with steps to guide you through the process
- d. It is an unfamiliar hearing process as there is not a judge involved.
- e. There is some discrepancy between a 15 days and 10 day’s notice and right, as well as dates for mailing and holidays.

Should we allow e-mail transmissions for requesting a hearing?

- a. The process is outlined in Chapter 48 so we have limited authority to make change

Discussed the tracking of appeals process after TPR; counties don’t get that information and sometimes the case comes back to the county for further exploration.

- a. E-mailing makes it more accessible; a general mailbox and not to a specific person is recommended.
- b. Acknowledgement that the hearing request has been received via email would be helpful.



- c. Fax seems outdated and there is no response. The use of postal mail causes worry around timeframes.
- d. Clarify on legal holidays – be more clear what days are legal holidays
- e. eWiSACWIS documentation is difficult when revoking and you must wait for appeal timeframe to expire. **Recommendation:** Review the eWiSACWIS Desk Guide to this process for updating.
- f. Current process allows you to do a “licensing action” to put the process on pause and then enter status of the appeal (similar to kinship process).
- g. Appeals process in the Handbook explains that if a foster parent wins an appeal and license is reinstated, there is no guarantee that a child may be placed or returned to the home. Change of placement could still be upheld. Appeal process and decision is separate from placement making decisions.
- h. If a foster parent appealed with a written 30 day change of placement this will go to the Division of Hearing & Appeals. *Question posed: Why are there two processes allowed through statute?* Recommendation from the Children’s Court Improvement Project identified that the 10 days’ notice is always conducted via the court. However, the foster home agreement states that they have 30 days’ notice. DCF commented that the 30 days’ notice is for a placement of a child that exceeds 6 months.

III. DCF 56 Rule Revision – 56.12 Handbook

In which instances are these provided, in what form, and are there challenges related to using the Handbook with applicants?

- a. Typically included in county procedures and the licensing process.
- b. There is a general consensus that foster parents are not referring to them and instead ask questions of child welfare professionals, in lieu of looking up rules.
- c. State handbook is offered via paper or a USB thumb drive. Many counties print and then add 40+ pages of internal county policies. If counties update policies they will ask for the USB thumb drive back to update the policies
- d. Many families do not seek independent solutions and find it easier to ask the child welfare professional to look up information.
- e. Duplicity with the handbook and other documents which they are required to handout to foster parents is challenging.
- f. A county interpreted that they needed to provide a tangible/concrete handbook in print or a USB thumb drive to all foster parents. If language was updated to state document or a weblink, it was acceptable, and some foster parents may want the weblink instead of a written document (paperless preference)



What feedback do you get from families regarding the content?

- a. No feedback from the county foster parents has been received by the group.

Should we continue to provide a "handbook" or is there another option to provide this type of information?

- a. Feedback on Form DCF-P-5105, Promoting Normalcy for Children in Out-of-Home Care is the same as the "brochure". This may be duplicative
- b. Confusion exists about numerous forms related to Prudent Parenting.

Can we include Prudent Parenting and other required forms in the Handbook, so foster care coordinators don't forget to hand it out?

- c. Could this include updates (ex. Barred crimes) in the handbook (which we link) and sent to the counties.?
- d. Provided link to the foster care forms as requested
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/fc/forms>.

IV. DCF 56 Rule Revisions – 56.15 Supervising Agency

- a. Prudent Parenting Discussion

Do you provide the foster parent with the brochure required under s. DCF 56.12 (1) (h). for Prudent Parenting?

- a. Please see notes from above items

What would you remove from this section?

- b. Notification to the school district has been questioned, whether school districts accurately store this information and in some cases challenge that they did not receive notification from a county that a child has entered foster care in their district.

How can DCF and DPI improve this process and/or make it more effective?

- c. Does not specify that the notice is in writing, fax or email, perhaps clarification and one method could be written into rule.
- d. Could there be a portal where to provide this information with access by partnering agencies?
- e. School district notice; most counties send to the district office and does not get to the school where the child is placed, causing confusion.

V. Next Steps

*Request for feedback from the Advisory Council: Anything from prior meetings
.....that you have questions/reflections on? No comments*

- a. Dana shared the rule writing decision tree/tracking progress



Question raised regarding Telephone Use in rule: Request for an update on phone, which was previously discussed: Northeast Region Foster care coordinators wanted an expansive definition of a “phone” to go beyond cellular devices and include all recording or other electronic devices such as Alexa to be available and allowable under this rule section. The Amish culture was discussed as exceptions are often made related to their use of community telephones.

VI. Adjourn

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Advisory Council Meeting: 3/20/24 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm via Zoom

Steering Committee: 4/8/24 10:00am to 11:00am via Zoom