



DCF 56 Advisory Council Meeting - MINUTES

1/8/2024 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

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

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	X	Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA)	Wisconsin Association of Family and Child Agencies (WAFCA)	Child Welfare
Jill Collins	X	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	X	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		Public Adoptions	Children's Wisconsin	Foster Care and Adoptions
Patty Baker		Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS)	Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS)	Child Welfare Training
Cassandra Eggert		WCHSA	Outagamie County Human Services Department	Ongoing Child Welfare and Foster Care
Laura Goba		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		DMCPS	Wellpoint	Congregate Care Facilities and Services
Allison Higgins	X	WAFCA	Foundations for Healthy Transitional Living	Private Child Placing Agency
Julie Kay		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 Lim		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

Also in Attendance: Karen Steinbach – LaCausa



AGENDA

- (10:00-10:05) I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions
(10:05-10:20) II. DCF 56 Non-Relative Rule Status
(10:25-10:40) III. DCF 56 Relative Rule Status
(10:40-10:50) IV. Flagged Items for Review
(10:50-10:55) V. Next Steps
(11:00) IV. Adjourn

MEETING NOTES

- I. **Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions (Dana)**
 - i. Roll call taken and introductions made
- II. **DCF 56 Non-Relative Rule Status**
 - i. Reviewed recommended changes to rule language identified by the Advisory Council work. This included areas 56.04/.07/.09 Living Space of unsafe buildings and property, water testing, kitchens, denoting that the requirements of the number of bathrooms is too much oversight, and added 'communication device' for access to contact emergency personnel is adaptive to changes in communication technology (rather than only a landline requirement).
 - ii. Discussed changes to 56.07 & 56.08 related to adding tornado drills to fire emergency plans, updated carbon monoxide locations (removing specific placement requirements due to variable home, apartment layout), and that the emergency plans should be practiced in addition to being posted.
 - iii. Highlighted continued work on determining the maximum number of children who may be in a foster home and updates to the accessibility and procedure for providing the Foster Parent Handbook identified in 56.12.
 - iv. Outlined revised language that removes age from rule as to the Condition of the Home (56.07 – formerly Physical Environment), and instead incorporating 'based upon the foster child's age or level of functioning.

Feedback from Steering Committee

- v. A child should be able to have access (a right) to a cellular phone and they should be able to contact their child welfare professional, legal counsel; and that the access to a phone should be unfettered.

III. DCF 56 Relative Rule Status



- i. Discussed the current progress towards writing a separate rule/standard for relatives who wish to be licensed (as per the new allowable [Federal Rule](#)). We discussed the use of the National Organizations model in informing this standard and highlighted. ([Resource on National Organization Recommendations](#))

Feedback from Steering Committee

- ii. Training requirements need to be considered in that a reduction in the number of hours and content will not be appropriate to require for children who are already known to a relative caregiver. Perhaps the content of the training could be tailored towards the CPS process.
- iii. The rule should be more flexible for relatives while not compromising safety, especially since many children already reside in part with their relatives.
- iv. We should provide both understanding and appreciation for the capabilities of providing for their relative child and that using a tool such as SAFE will be intrusive and unreasonable in this understanding and support. Often relatives' mistrust or do not want to be engaged with the intrusive child welfare system, therefore this will help alleviate this issue.
- v. Financial discussions should not be part of a relative licensing process, in that thresholds should not need to be met as non-relative foster applicants.
- vi. In preparing rule language, include more 'or' opportunities such as 'access to reliable transportation or someone who can assist in providing reliable transportation.'
- vii. Relative rule should be simple, not require a licensing process if there are other avenues such as kinship (and not require a licensing process to take placement of a relative child), and identify that relative homes are able to provide adequate support and should not be judged or approved by a licensing agency because that is the current status quo of the system.

IV. Flagged Items for Review

- i. Discussed items that are under Sponsor, DCF Administrator, or DHHS Secretary review including:
 - 1. Firearms
 - 2. Sleeping Arrangements and Bedrooms
 - 3. Substitute Caregivers and ability to pay an un-licensed provider
 - 4. Physical restraints and discipline



5. Homeschooling
6. Searches by foster parents of youth personal objects or bedrooms
7. Audio/Video Monitoring & Recording

Feedback from Steering Committee

- ii. Monitoring may be beneficial if a child has medical needs, may be worried about harm to self, or if a child is non-verbal.
- iii. Wisconsin is a 1-party consent state and therefore audio recording may not be able to be incorporated in rule.
- iv. It may be important to indicate 'how' searches should be conducted, including the presence of a child, identifying the need for the search, document the concern, and engage concepts of safety for the child and the home. Rule should not include language that is strict that may require foster parents to contact law enforcement to conduct searches. Youth should have autonomy and there should be a safety reason stated for the search, perhaps using criteria that we use in our safety decision making (OVOIS).
- v. DHS rule currently provides oversight of video/audio recording in residential and other group care settings, and this is applied to foster care. We train individuals on the DHS rule but may want to incorporate this rule in DCF 56 so that people learn and recognize where the rule language is located.

V. Next Steps

- i. Continue monthly Advisory Council meetings
- ii. Scheduling additional community partner feedback sessions
- iii. DRAFT rule sections should be ready for review by the Steering Committee at the next meeting.
- iv. Relative Licensing Rule/Standard should have its first drafting instructions forwarded to Elaine Pridgen by the end of summer 2024.
- v. Working with national experts regarding firearm safety protocol and determining options for the DCF AO and SO.
- vi. Soliciting feedback regarding rule items and language from many community partners. Please send any feedback to DanaL.Johnson@wisconsin.gov

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Steering Committee: 7/15/24 10:00am to 11:00am via Zoom

Advisory Council Meeting: 4/17/24 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm via Zoom