

MRS Conference Call Notes
June 2010

Counties Participating 6/16: Davie, Graham, Harnett, Jackson, Mitchell, Scotland
IFPS/Reunification Providers: Rose Townsend (Eckerd), Scott Craver (Exchange SCAN), Lelia Smallwood (Children's Home), Shannon Moore (Appalachian Family Innovations).

Counties Participating 6/17: Catawba, Chatham, Davidson, Gaston, Hoke, Johnston, Lenoir, Macon, Pasquotank, Person, Rowan, Scotland.
IFPS/Reunification Providers: Rose Townsend, Ellyn Evans & Rusty Barnes (Eckerd), Cynthia Napoleon-Hanger (Exchange SCAN), Lelia Smallwood (Children's Home), Brenda Caldwell (Appalachian Family Innovations), Michelle Gentry (Methodist Home), Jolita Jackson (Mountain Youth Resources).

Counties Participating 6/29: Bladen, Brunswick, Buncombe, Caswell, Cartaret, Catawba, Edgecombe, Gaston, Halifax, Iredell, Lee, McDowell, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Pitt, Rockingham, Onslow, Union, Washington, Wilson, Yadkin.

IFPS/Reunification Providers: Sarah Black (Exchange/SCAN & The Family Center of Alamance), Patrice White, Courtney, Ashton (Appalachian Family Innovations), Brian Poppe (Methodist Home).

Agenda

Announcements from Raleigh
Intensive Family Preservation & Reunification Services – new program models
Transfer of Learning
Teambuilding

News from Raleigh

Letters:

- 5/17 - Training calendar for June-December came out. Holly let people know that if there is a training you want to attend even if you know it is full please send in a registration. Only by knowing how many people had to be turned down, can the Training Team know how much additional interest there was in a particular class.
- 5/14 - Admin letter IVE - Determination and Daysheet coding. These are the letters that come out over the list serve. Holly reminded everyone if you have changed your address you need to sign in to the list serve with your new address. Instructions for this are in the letter dated 1/15/09.
- 6/1 – SIS ID Merge. More information and instructions in that letter. Just wanted to make folks aware and if there are questions or concerns, call Wayne Chaisen at 919-334-1247.

Other updates from Raleigh:

- Forthcoming letter - Some counties are not aware of the requirements for doing a fingerprint based criminal records check for all potential adoptive parents. A DCD letter will be coming out at some point, but Tom wanted to make sure everyone knew about this. If you have questions in the meantime, contact him.

Adam Walsh and National Criminal Records Information Updates

- The Division has been meeting with the SBI and more questions have come up. In the meantime Terri shared two pieces of advice:
 - One, make sure that when you are sending in ORI application send this to Terri, not to the SBI. Also when you are filling out the application, follow the instructions to the letter or it will be kicked back.
 - Previously the Division was encouraging counties to enter in an MOU with law enforcement, but now want counties to start having those conversations, but not actually sign the MOU yet. The SBI has agreed to provide a template that includes specific language that they need to have in there (waiting on the FBI to get clarification on language that needs to be in there). So don't actually do an MOU, because we will need to use this one that is coming, but go ahead and start having the conversation if you have not already.

Rodney & Devon – Former foster youth and were very active in SAYSO and we are happy to have them working with us this summer. Give a great perspective from the youth view. They are each on some but not all the calls, but both are very excited to be here, and are learning a lot, and hope to leave their footprint at the end of the summer!

Intensive Family Preservation (IFPS) and Reunification Services

Tom Smith from the Division did a preservation regarding these services.

- We have done an RFA and awarded contracts with providers for the next three years.
- The Division also used to offer Less Intensive Family Preservation (FP) and Intensive (IFPS) – no longer have FP so when he says family preservation, that is the intensive model.
- The IFPS model has been tightened up. Basically the same model, just some minor changes to tighten up the model.
- Reunification however is significantly different.

IFPS

- Basics of the model – still 4-6 weeks of intensive services.
- Services available 24 hrs a day, in the home.
- Families must be at imminent risk (high risk rating on 5104) to be eligible.
- There is a \$300 allotment of flexfunds per family per intervention.

Reunification

- This model had more significant changes. Used to work with families up to a year, and worked with families when the children were out of the home. This year the model has changed and will be more intense.
- Providers should respond within 72 hours of referral and have met the family and engaged in services by the end of that time.
- Maximum caseload of 2 families.
- There will be a 2 week prep period when the child is still in foster care but is ready to return home. After that the child will be returned to the home, and there will be a very 4 week service that is very “IFPS-like”, and as with IFPS, there is an option to extend this part for two weeks. Then there will be a 2 week phase of less intensive contact sort of “phasing out”. And periodic contact throughout the following year.
- There is a \$300 allotment of flexfunds per family per intervention.

General Information applicable to both models of service

- Relationship to reasonable efforts. This is mentioned at IVE training.
 - If you are thinking of making reasonable efforts to prevent a child from coming into foster care, it is critical of you to consider IFPS. Can you say that you have made reasonable efforts if you have not even considered it?
 - With Reunification can you say you have made a reasonable effort to reunify a child back in the home if you have not at least made a referral?
- There have been areas of the state where although technically the services were available in practice they were not really. This should change with the new fiscal year. If there is a vacancy available in a caseload, the Division is requiring providers to notify the counties in their area on a daily basis until that vacancy is filled.
- Asked that people make referrals even if the caseloads are full, because we would like to track what the need is above our capacity to provide services so that during the next long session we can approach the General Assembly for additional funding.
- List of all the providers with what counties they serve:

Region	Provider	Counties Included
Region 1	Mountain Youth Resources	Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, Transylvania, EBCI
Region 2	Mountain Youth Resources – subcontracting with AFI	Avery, Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Yancey
Region 3	Appalachian Family Innovations	Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Watauga, Wilkes
Region 4	Children’s Home Society	Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Stanly, Union

Region 5	Exchange Club/ SCAN	Davidson, Davie, Fordyth, Iredell, Rockingham, Rowan, Stokes, Surry, Yadkin
Region 6	Exchange Club/ SCAN	Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Guilford, Orange, Person, Randolph
Region 7	Eckerd Youth Alternatives	Anson, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Scotland
Region 8	Children's Home Society	Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Johnston, Nash, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne, Wilson
Region 9	Children's Home Society	Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Pender, Robeson, Sampson
Region 10	Methodist Home for Children	Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Martin, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, Washington,
Region 11	Methodist Home for Children	Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Greene, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, Pitt.

Questions:

Wanted some clarification on the 2 week period before the return home in reunification.

- Tom said these are cases where the DSS and the court agrees that the child can return home, this is just working to facilitate this happen in a planful, managed way. Don't start the service before the court has said the child can go home.

If the DSS has already made the referral and then when they went to court the judge does not send the child home, does the referral stop or can you go ahead with it?

- Have to use judgment. There is a limited time frame available for these services and you want to ensure that the provider can work with the family when the child actually does go home. So, if the judge is thinking a month or more, may want to re-refer later on. If it's only a short time, may go ahead and start. But try to be talking to the judge so you are pretty sure the child will be going home when the referral is made.

What if the judge says yes the child can go home and orders that the child go home that day? Can the DSS make the referral then?

- Yes.

How was the amount of funding per region determined?

- By looking at the number of eligible children in each county and the adding together the % for each county to determine the percentage of the state that the region represents.

Transfer of Learning

Any time someone goes to training once they come home, taking what they learned and using it in the field can be a challenge in the best of times, especially in a crisis driven job like we have. This came from the Policy to Practice meeting at the Division every month, where we ensure we have good policy in place and how we can assist counties to ensure that policy is implemented the best way possible in practice.

What are things people are doing to maximize this?

When counties send people to training, they are out of the office, and you want it to be a benefit when they return – how do people ensure that they are able to put what they learned into practice?

- One of the things Holly has been talking about is that in almost all trainings one of the last things they do is write down some goals and small steps of how they would like to incorporate the skills/knowledge they have learned into practice when they return back to the office. Research shows that this increases the chances that they will do this. Holly encourages workers to share these goals with their supervisors when they get back and have the supervisors support and follow up with the workers to find out if they have implemented these strategies and how they are going.
- One IFPS/RU provider asks anyone who attends training to present for approx 30 minutes on their training at their next staff meeting. This helps to share the knowledge and also serves to increase the presentation/public speaking skills of the worker in question.
- Another county has lunch and learns and people who were able to attend outside meetings (Children's Services, etc.) present on whatever they went to.
 - Holly added that speaking it back to others also reinforces it to the worker who went.
- Talked about web based training – some of these are live just over the web and some are self paced or have a self paced component. Obviously there is not travel involved and the fact that you can work at your own pace and re-watch some of them is helpful to some people.
- One county suggested that there be some shorter refresher courses offered from the Division for workers/supervisors who have been around a long time to go back and have a one or two day refresher course. This is valuable because it keeps long term workers refreshed and also in touch with what new workers are bringing back from training, which may be different that it was when the senior worker went many years ago.
 - Holly is very supportive of this idea, however currently due to the fiscal situation, refreshers are a luxury we cannot afford. Hopefully that will change someday!

Teambuilding

What kind of teams do you have and what are things that you do to help build your team or keep it strong?

- One of the things Holly has heard is that one supervisor has a “kudos” box. She was thinking about different learning styles and what would motivate her different people and put together some things in the box to give out when a worker did a really good job on something they had been struggling with, or met a goal they are allowed to pull something out of the kudos box. In two weeks she had people really excited about being able to pull things out of the kudos box!

June 16th

- Some people just take the first 15 mins of staff meeting to check in personally with the team (kids, school, etc.) This is something that has no monetary cost but makes people feel more a part of the team.
- Davie county has someone with really good candy on her desk and they seems to like coming in to see her and get the “good candy”. They are a small unit and they try to attend each other’s personal things outside of work when they can. Its not defined and organized, but a general feeling of “we are all in this together”. For example, a co-worker was moving and they painted her house with her. This has helped them achieve a longevity of her team.
- This supervisor also programmed their phone so that each worker has a ringback tone that is specific to them that they like. Really simple, but every time the call their supervisor they smile.
- Particularly if they do a good job in court (or other areas), she sends them a “good job” email and CC’s the Director. They can look at this email and they know it has been sent up the line so their good work is known outside the team.
- FISH principles – PLAY! People need to be able to have some fun in the midst of their work.

June 17th

- Gaston just started team retreats – it’s a half day, get to dress casual and go off site. Look at overall goals for the last year, and see which ones were accomplished, how well they were accomplished and where they can change their approach and then look at the goals for the coming year.
- Pasquotank has the “extra hour” – during your birthday month you get an extra four hours to go on a longer lunch, or leave early or something like that.
- Chatham has the supervisors cook and serve breakfast to the social workers during SW appreciation month. Also had a celebration where they awarded everyone superlatives, and have a potluck for the agency around the holidays. Try to do this as an agency as a whole, not just as a unit.

June 29th

- One county did a Spring Fling and had a Peanuts cartoon theme, one of the supervisors cooked for them. Everyone came up with their own character and did research on the one they decided to come as.

- Several counties have had lunches where they are not talking about work. Either talk specifically about non-work items, or have a non-work free for all. Once county made the lunch an extra hour and played games.
- Easter egg hunt. Its was like kids in a candy store – they had a blast!

Voluntary Services

Team that takes on voluntary services case – how do you decide who takes that, what does this look like?

Screen out reports? Any outreach? If so, what are the criteria and what do you do?

- Tried to educate the judges on 330 services. Have had pretty good success with that.
- One county has a worker that does this full time.
- Another county will take cases and use 330 services. Try to offer supportive services when they can and some families call in and ask for those. Also when there is an assessment and there are no findings, but there are issues that could lead to CPS in the future (or if they need help navigating systems – CPS, MH, etc.)
- Some counties have prevention workers that will work with these folks.

July dates 22, 27, 28.