



Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2024 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols and Introductions

DCYF Community Engagement Manager, Emily Morgan and PAG Executive Committee member, Christianna Clinton welcomed attendees and initiated introductions. PAG member, Natasha Fecteau Minger delivered a land acknowledgement.

Community Agreements Proposal

PAG Executive Committee member, Janel Waterman proposed Community Agreements for the larger group to adopt.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Come to each meeting with open-mindedness, curiosity, and compassion. This means showing respect for other’s perspectives, values, language, experience, and opinions to ensure everyone feels heard & supported while setting our personal values & judgment aside.• Be aware of the processes involved & the scope of our mission as an advisory group - embrace friction/disagreement but ask for clarification & “quit taking it personally” (QTIP). Offer grace, avoid blame and shame, apologize for harm, and be mindful of your words' impact.• Be mindful of time and space – allow others a chance to speak. Encourage & create space for those who don’t speak often or are more reserved. Ask for members’ input.• Community Agreement proposal questions/ comments?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I would just add that being uncomfortable is ok.○ I would like to add that we all come from all our backgrounds and experiences and what’s shared in the group is private.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ These are public (open) meetings (Open Public Meetings Act), so we discussed the anonymity in our executive committee as well.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maybe we can state it as a reminder in our onboarding process.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Make this a living document because in a year this could be revised.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ I would say we finalize it now and can revisit it later.○ Can you give me a thumbs up (in the room) for confirmation.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Room is in agreeance.○ On more comment about the meetings being public, can we share that in reminder emails too?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Yes, we can.
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Updates and Report Backs

PAG members provided updates and had the opportunity to report back on any engagement opportunities they have participated in.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ELAC update<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ My schedule isn't aligning up, can I volunteer my position.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Yes, you would be giving your spot to Christianna.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We discussed in our executive committee (EC) that you can't serve in both.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ok, let's follow up and circle back.• NRM Group Care update<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It's a lot of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and information, and I get to speak up for myself as a foster child. And there's consistency with the moderator and bringing up past questions for clarifications. I still wish there was process for conflict resolution.○ What is the purpose of the committee?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Negotiated Rule Making (NRM) is a way to develop rules by seeking consensus from delegates representing groupings of similar parties impacted by the rule.▪ This is the first time for NRM Group Care and there could be more explanation for the process for it.○ I would agree; last night we were hung up and the facilitator is doing a great job too.• Assessment Redesign update<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We just had our first meeting so not too much of an update. It's an emotional process and I'm appreciative of the facilitator.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Can you clarify or describe what these groups are?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These are focus groups that were presented at the last PAG meeting.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I missed the last email.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Chapin Hall will be taking over calendar invites moving forward, and you can email Community Engagement for questions.○ I wanted to share my experience from the meeting, it's a great group to part of. I'm able to share my experience when DCYF came to my home and Doug is a great facilitator.• Therapeutic Foster Care update<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How can I become involved; I would like to be added?
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- I will connect with Ayn Witman, ayn.witman@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - How did I know which group I signed up for?
 - Emails were sent out.
- I would like to know how I can become part of these groups, based on my experience with CPS.
 - We sent emails for recruitment on these groups. I know we send a lot of emails and we're open to feedback on how to share information with you.
 - You can separate these updates in different emails.
 - The emails are too long, and separating out the recording and notes and I don't realize the other information.
 - I find the tables not helpful and throws me off. The organization of the emails could be worked on.
 - To me the emails don't cause me an issue, and color coded and different font could help.
 - A separate email for that specific topic.
- Unsung Heroes update
 - We went through all the applications, and made our recommendations and the ceremony is Feb 23, 2024, in Olympia.
- Provider Supports update
 - We had our last meeting in December. We learned that 4% of intake calls are founded. Why are we spending so much time on these intake calls and waiting on feedback? We also learned about community café, early learning language access, getting sign language added, background check updates (2 years vs 5 years and expressed concerns), health care plan for childcare workers. Next meeting in is April.
- Children's Health Insurance Program ([CHIP](#)) update
 - Housing, jobs, mental health, childcare issues, and each county got to elect our issues and our county decided on childcare. No one else on the committee had experience in childcare and I was the only one, so I'm helping to set goals for providers in the area.
- Governor's poverty reduction work group update ([website](#))
 - Met with legislators and meeting basic needs and transforming the cash assistance program.
- Health and Justice and Recovery Alliance update ([website](#))



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spokane and Stevens County don't have a host for Parents for Parents and Health and Justice Alliance is stepping in. I will be a host parent and guiding parents through the child welfare system. ● What about a landing page that lists the upcoming events and opportunities with links for sign up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That is a great idea. We can add those opportunities to the webpage when they are open. ● I'm part of People's First an advocacy group for people intellectual disabilities and Pierce and King County are selected to be part of the conference. I'm a big advocate for a bill "Nothing Without Us- HB1566" and working to get it pushed through legislative session. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I'm part of Washington State Community Connectors (WCCC) serving families with children with mental and behavioral health. ● DCYF Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are developing a Community Engagement framework with a consulting firm the Athena group. ○ LGBTQIA+ advisory group we are figuring out what the scope of that group will be and figuring out the best way to support our youth and LGBTQIA+ representation. ○ Language Access Plan group is to represent the procedures, processes, and best practices to help DCYF promote language-based inclusion and enhance our capacity to serve families with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
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Legislative Update

DCYF Senior Policy Advisor, Melissa Cheesman updated members on the landscape and potential outcomes for the 2025 legislative session.

- [Legislative Update Presentation](#)
- [HB 1916](#)
- [SB 5933](#)
- [SB 1550](#)
- [HB 2007](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can a governor sign a bill but not fund it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sometimes bills are written in a way that cost money to an agency, but then not approved and therefore funded. I can't directly answer why he didn't fund it.
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- [HB 5793](#)- Workgroup committee worked on this and became effective 2022 and it states that agencies need to pay for their lived experiences. So why did this not get funded?
 - This is a good policy related question. This presentation is based on DCYF requests that are presented to the Governor and he then creates his proposed budget, which is what we are discussing.
 - Right now we were talking about the disconnect between a bill and the funding around these topics.
- Question on HB 2007, what are the time limits until is it approved?
 - It's still under consideration and needs to be signed by March 7
- If something wasn't included in the governor's budget does that mean that it can't be included in the legislature's final budget?
 - No, there's always opportunity to comment and advocate and let your legislators know what you think.
- How can I learn more about the legislature?
 - [Legislative Information Center](#) (tutorials and bill tracking)
 - [Session cutoff calendar](#).
- Who is responsible for pushing back against the governor when they don't follow through within the agency?
 - It comes from the community, and I understand that doesn't feel good (lack of accountability).
 - It feels dismissive of him to sign something and not provide the funding.
 - We are the folks who use these services, yet when it comes to advocating for our needs it feels like it doesn't matter and there isn't accountability on their end and they don't know what it feels like to be us. Government agencies need to listen to the people it serves, be prepared to be held accountable.
 - I agree with you, the state agencies serve as the elected officials and they need us for the vote.
 - We're just talking about the system protecting the system, it is doing exactly what it's designed to do. He (governor) is doing exact what he signed on to do, and it's



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	not easy for folks who look like me.
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Family Resource Center

DCYF Strengthening Families Washington Administrator Laura Alfani, Primary & Community Prevention Specialist Marilyn Gisser, and Family First Prevention Program Consultant Michelle Hankinson provided a brief overview of the presentation and asked members for feedback on using Family Resource Centers as a prevention strategy.

- [Family Resource Center Presentation](#)
- [Family Resource Center Handout](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What qualifies as a family resource center (FRC)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We're going to further define this in our presentation. • To whom or where do you most often go when you have a (concrete) need? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I don't. For the most part we do our best to figure it out ourselves because we learned asking for help gets you in trouble. ○ Support groups and family. ○ No one, you can't trust anyone. ○ SNAP, Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery, Spokane Valley Food bank ○ My first place tends to be family, friends, then a community connection (school or church). ○ I typically go to my family when I have a concrete need. ○ My sister or other family or a couple of friends I trust. ○ Depending on the need, I'll tap into the long list of community resources that I have. ○ I would go to my dad who is my biggest support for myself my son. ○ I try to fill it myself and if that fails then I go to the community resources. ○ Can you further define "concrete" and depends on the need? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We think about goods, diapers, supplies, food as needs. You can define this based on your own needs too. • Are you aware of any Family Resource Centers in your community? They may call themselves something else. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Never used one in my life for someone who has been on welfare for 20+ years.
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- I feel that the ones near me in Pierce County don't do much to get the word out on what they provide for support or services.
- There are over about 100 FRCs in the state of WA, but one of the challenges right now is there isn't a FRC list.
- I just googled and didn't find any in my area of south Seattle.
- The original was the Cynthia Green building in Skyway.
- I lived in the Bethel and Franklin Pierce. I was well rooted in the community and never knew about this service until I recently started working at the Health Department.
- FRC Spokane County- 130 S Arthur St.
- That would depend on the definition of FRC, does it mean where to get help? Then yes I know of them.
- Other school districts resources are cut in half.
- Is there just one centralized system or is it a broad description?
 - It can be stand alone or connected to other organizations (health department), it's a broad term.
- In Pierce County, the FRCs are specifically connected with the health department. Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the program for families with young children for nutritional supports. Many others are connected to school districts. In Vancouver, for example, all the schools (elementary - I think) have a Family Resource Center.
- If you or someone you know has gone to an FRC, what was that experience like? What went well and what would you have liked to be different?
 - No responses
- What do you think the benefit is, or could be, of having an FRC in the community?
 - I feel like we need mental health support in place before youth are placed in foster care.
 - One stop shop for help with needs.
 - A place to go get questions answered. A safe place and possibly a place for food or resources (medicine pick up).
- How could FRCs make themselves welcoming for people with different backgrounds and ages?
 - It would be nice to have a list of these community resources. And we could become allies and help to educate our own communities and other organizations as a way spread the word.



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	<p>Sounds like they have resources that we don't really know about.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We discussed the disconnect in FRC, the need for FRC to be attached to income eligibility, we discussed schools and trust rebuilding especially when child welfare was is involved.○ We talked about mobile services, fairs that pop up in the county, and rural access with limited access. Resource ambassadors and meeting family's needs proactively and creating relationships that make family's feel safe asking for support and funding.○ That reminds me that there are a bunch of Facebook parent groups/mom groups that folks go to for help/resources. I like Heather's idea for DCFY having something similar. <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What should DCYF be considering as we explore expansion of FRCs? How would/should parents be involved in next steps?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ DCYF could change their image and have more of a rapport with communities and list FRCs on the DCYF website.○ If I saw a FRC I would not see this as a DCYF centered resource.○ FRCs can bridge entrenched silos. This opportunity needs to be addressed in the planning stages.○ Define what an FRC is, the mission and vision.○ A place to go for mail, showers, laundry, housing or shelter or resources such as socks and blankets. Also help completing applications like childcare, DSHS, SSI (etc.).○ Parents should be at planning and implanting table.○ On site nurses, mental health personal and school personal navigator.○ DCYF has preventative measures yet there's so much stigma around child welfare and I agree there needs to be rebranding/ rebuilding with the community.○ My daughter has anxiety and makes unsafe decisions. I called her psychologist when she was emotional irregulated and they asked if she had a plan. Families should not feel DCYF is the last option, it should also be preventive option.○ I called CPS for resources because children are in abusive environment and was told I should handle it.● Is there anything you would us to report back or return to PAG to discuss?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Please report back to PAG how this project is moving forward.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The online group shared similar thoughts as the in-person group. Sometimes FRCs are connected to WICs and folks don't know to ask for that support. ○ Can you please send us a list of the 9 contracted FRC centers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes, we will email Community Engagement team.
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2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan

DCYF Performance Improvement & Federal Reporting Manager, Roxanne Cates asked for feedback on the early stages of the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan development. This five-year strategic plan is for programs that receive Title IV-E funds, which encompasses most of child welfare, many PPS programs, and some aspects of licensing.

- [Child and Family Service Plan Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From your perspective, what has worked well with DCYF's initial meeting with families? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Protective Services (CPS) entered my life when I was 14 and it was not positive and I had a visit from CPS recently and it was slightly better experience, although the tone of the recent meeting was a bit threatening. "If you can't meet with us, we will go to daughter's school." ○ 1st contact was a phone call when a CPS investigator was in the driveway. He was rude and threatening, showed up at lunchtime (super busy part of the day), demanded to speak to each of us separately while we had a crowd of children here. Then (at final report time) made further allegations about "use of cameras" (when we don't even have cameras) - so, he basically made up this part. ○ What happens if a family does not comply with an intake? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I'm uncertain and I can get a response from the program manager. ○ I've had 3 different interactions, first two interactions were belittling and traumatizing and third time was a different experience. The casework was a phenomenal and nice man and when talked about my child his face lit up. • Is there any specific things DCYF should have done better? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not take situations out of context. Make sure families know you're there to help. ○ Don't be abrasive and expect the worst. Just because there was a report doesn't make it true.
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- I admit I wasn't being a good parent and was under the influence. The first two interactions I was treated like a criminal and the third caseworker treated me normally and made it about the children.
- They refused to give breast milk to my baby, and he was covered in dried vomit.
- Strength-based is a good approach. I've had 3 unwanted knocks at my door, and it was a rude and judgmental experience. The last time there was more accepting and positive.
- CPS has a "police" reputation and they need a new approach, but they'll have to build this new reputation over time (it's going to take a generation or 2 at least to repair this...).
- As a foster parent and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), I'm concerned DCYF isn't assessing safety concerns. It took 25 calls before my children were removed in a home where another child died. It's unacceptable.
- I have a different experience being foster/adoptive parent and having social worker friends. It's a tough job and is there consideration for the mental approach aspect for case workers?
 - Workforce is a listed goal, and we did hire a staff support position. In the governor's budget there is also a peer support system for social workers. Part of this development process is to meet with leadership across different programs for feedback.
- Each encounter with CPS left me in shock. When you asked how can we do better, let's start with supporting families before it escalates. Listen to what we're telling you. If I get so much judgment for my past, there feels like a bias against me. We also need to have lived experts at the table.
- Clarifying question is this self-reported, how is this determined?
 - Both, interviews from social workers, case works and parents.
- Are the services meeting families' needs?
 - Where is Indian Child Welfare (ICW) housed? How to bridge silos?
 - We'll be talking with Tribal Policy Advisory Council (TPAC) and working on getting alignment.



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- And these Tribal offices are in conversations together?
 - Yes
- When my child was taken, they didn't ask about their needs (medically, religious, culturally).
 - Someone mentioned Safe Care, did you use that?
 - I know of it, but it also wasn't accessible. Those things cost money (railings and covers) and having my older child assisting me is necessary. Somethings were overly critical and don't work for my family's needs.
- As a foster parent you we must take a foster child to a doctor within 3 days. We must do what the parents want, so there is communication happening.
 - It isn't always shared and communicated. We don't know where they are going and what's happening.
 - And I (as a foster parent) must give my contact number to the parent.
 - This is helpful for me to investigate this feedback further as a regional and systemic issue.
- Universal childcare will keep families together.
- A parent support call or intake with a foster child should happen.
 - Parent for Parent group is that type of resource.
 - [4250: Placement Out-of-Home and Conditions for Return Home.](#)
- Adoption support: training, parent workshops, kid peer groups.
- Most families are finding themselves in crisis. Help getting people's mental health under control is needed.
- I know there are CASAs and advocates for the kids, but is there a role for someone who advocates for & supports parents?
- Respite care without judgement! Sometimes a man, especially a man with kids with disabilities needs help and a break, not judgement.
 - Not allowing a daycare to kick a child out.
- How well is DCYF providing services that take into account cultural and developmental needs?
 - Very poorly



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- No, they placed me with my mom's ex husband.
 - Indian Child Welfare (ICW) is the gold standard. Instead of reducing expand to all children regardless of obvious cultural differences or citizenship status.
- How have caseworkers engaged you or your child in case planning? What worked well?
 - Challenges with the way caseworkers talk to parents and transparency around communication. How can we make sure the process is fulfilled in supporting families, foster parents, adopted children (who have high needs)?
 - Everyone wants what's best for children (both foster and birth parents) so when is the opportunity for them to come together? I have 3 generations of children lost (in the system).
 - I went to my attorney and wrote my own parenting plan even when the judge ordered for my children's return.
 - My caseworkers have never engaged me in service or planning my case.
- What is your experience with caseworker visits? Were there locations or times worked better for you?
 - I am the extended family, so every time a worker changes, I have to redevelop my status and prove my worth. I get meetings sometimes and then I get nothing and then suddenly there is a meeting I'm invited but not included.
 - They were last minute and often would make my husband miss work. He eventually couldn't keep working than they were mad at him for not working.
- How do you think we should better partner with parents and caregivers? What does strong engagement look like to you?
 - Have parents and caregivers meet each other in the DCYF (office) to break down barriers.
- I will follow up with your feedback with leadership and revisit this topic in a future meeting.
 - Does anyone at the leadership table have lived experience?
 - I don't know and will ask.