



Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2023 - 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Des Moines, Washington and Zoom

Welcome, Meeting Protocols and Introductions

DCYF Community Engagement Manager, Emily Morgan welcomed attendees and initiated introductions.

Discussion	<p>Please share why you are on PAG?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want the state to get input from people with lived experiences. • I'm here to find out why DCYF won't help until the problem is out of control. • I want to ensure no other families get needlessly ripped apart because poverty is not a crime.
-------------------	--

Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA)

DCYF Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) The Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability will provide a data walk to orient PAG members to DCYF strategic and programmatic goals, outcomes, and progress.

- [OIAA Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is OIAA? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our team is the research and evaluation team for DCYF and is responsible for performance-based contracting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are the contracts for families that need services and treatments? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, our office ensures contractors are meeting reasonable standards. • DCYF's Strategic Priorities 2021-2026 • Have you projected how long it might take you to get that population up to the statewide level? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our goal is 2026. • How were the nine outcomes narrowed done? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We combined similar outcomes and used data we had access to. That was also one of our barriers because they're not being regularly updated. • The Bellevue School District (BSD) is outright hostile to Special Education students. They are obstructive and undermine the individualized education programs (IEPs), Related Services, and Ancillary Services and warehoused and segregated my kid. It's atrocious and NONE of my Elected Representatives would help or intervene. The school board refuses to acknowledge the problem or respond to complaints. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It's a De Facto Caste system for individuals who need Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other accommodations. • School District Liaisons should be moved from out from under the Superintendent and be independent through the Office of Equity at the State and School District levels. • Maybe someone at DCYF can create referrals do these different kinds of offices for the parents that have no idea how to navigate the system. • Instead of Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), we need Individual Education Accounts. I find based on my lived experience that these school districts simply are just not accountable. We need to put the power in the hands of the parents to choose where their education funds go. The best teachers and the best districts will get rewarded by the students and parents with the funding. • Also, there is NO childcare for Special Needs families.
-------------------	---



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

- I waited 3 years on a wait list for service through an agency and never got it.
- We need the legislature to pass a Thriving Wage Standard index to the MIT Living Wage Standard for their area and household composition (125%+ of [Massachusetts Institute of Technology \(MIT\) Living Wage Standard](#)).
- Within the workgroup that narrowed down the outcomes and goals, is there equitable representation of people (race and skills)?
 - There is representation in the first two stages but less so during the modification and revision. It is now at the DCYF leadership table.
- It's interesting that DCYF has educational related outcomes. Is there a system or process for how DCYF talks to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) so that there is alignment and consistency?
 - We work with OSPI and they do share data with us. However, much of it is not real time in the child welfare space. Most of the data is after the fact. There are regular interactions between the two agencies, but it's not a smooth system.
- What's being done for kids who aren't kindergarten ready for emotional reasons?
 - Kindergarten readiness is measured in several different ways and one does include social emotional readiness.
- Are you also looking at students with special needs and how their academics line up? Where is the data that supports what we are seeing across the state for behavioral and emotional special needs?
 - We have some information on special education needs and data around children with IEPs. There are a lot of things that are metrics of success and what we really want is for kids to develop knowledge, skills, and social emotional wellness from the educational system.
 - There is no comprehensive sex education for children on the spectrum. The only thing we do is tell them to find a trusted adult and a lot of abuse comes from trusted people. We need people to be life ready. Where are the programs for regulating emotions, addressing feelings, where to ask for help, how to balance a checkbook, keep track of finances? Those things are no longer taught in school.
 - These metrics are our north star. If we don't have these resources, then children will not be safe or be graduating high school.
- What about kids who don't have an IEP? What if they need one but can't get one?
 - It's important for DCYF to impact those spaces but we don't run the schools. We can influence some areas, but things like that is outside of our scope.
- When we say foster care, does that include kids who are in kinship care?
 - Yes, it includes any out of home placement.
- There is no place in Washington where we don't need more childcare.
 - Do we know the reason for that? Is it not enough providers? Is it too expensive?
 - There are a bunch of reasons that kind of work together.
 - Is there additional information on your website?
 - It might be on the Early Learning webpage.
 - We do have more in depth conversations about this at the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) meetings.
- How is increasing the percentage of kinship care providers related to reducing out of home care?
 - It's related to supporting parents and caregivers. Children have far better outcomes in out-of-home care when it's kinship care. While we want to reduce the numbers, we also want to give them as much support as we can in out-of-home care.



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

- What other indicators did you use to measure success?
 - We measured high school graduation and parole support services to the extent that those are available for youth and young adults.
- Love the idea of all homes with children having greater access to ongoing curriculum. I have no idea what my kids are learning sometimes except through them!
 - Furthermore, more parent/education involvement on the school level across the ages.
- DCYF workers are not adequately trained to consider special needs in placements - often they don't even recognize them, or they ignore important diagnoses. Then they get mad when the child doesn't fit into the box and the adults speak out about it.
 - I would really like to see better training and a mechanism to shift paths from "normal" to "this kid is medically fragile and a lot of the usual resources are not helpful and may even be harmful."

Kindergarten Readiness: 20% of children in foster care are ready for kindergarten right now. We want more than 20% of children to be ready for kindergarten. What are the barriers to access?

- Transportation
- Quality Providers
- Geography
- Parent visits (with children in out of home care) are being scheduled in the middle of the school day. If you're missing school, then how can you keep up?
- What efforts are being made for kids in rural areas? Can they assist the family with transportation? We need to prioritize access.
- Transportation is important for school readiness.
- Peer support, teachers and school staff that look like them and relate to them.
- Clothing and food.
- Mental wellness.
- Contact with any siblings.
- Funding for childcare and preschool.
- There is an issue with parents not knowing what kindergarten readiness looks like. We need to give parents the education and knowledge to build capacity.
- There are childcare barriers when centers don't offer part time. Having more access to full time early learning and partnership with daycares so people don't have to choose.
- Why isn't there more access and transparency about the services that are available?
- Kindergarten readiness is not all academic, they need to focus more on social-emotional readiness.
- Head Start and ECEAP need more funding to provide services within all the counties. Rural areas don't have those opportunities. 28% of children in foster care are ready for kindergarten.
- Educators/racial concordance
- Basic needs
- Need for part-time pre-K
- Sibling contact
- Child Welfare visits during school hours
- Movement between providers w/Child Welfare money
- Peer support
- Strengths based
- Education level of parents is important
- Teach young people to parent



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents understanding K-ready • Raise awareness of pre-k resources/content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Birth to 3 • Access to quality pre-k <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$\$/supply ○ All education at quality • Location/geography impacts transit and providers • Incentivize providers • Safely reduce the number of children in out of home care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4.5% of children re-enter care w/in 12 months of exit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Substance abuse treatment • Create successful transitions to adulthood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 41% of youth exiting JR don't have work the following year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What about the group age-out of foster? ▪ Peer mentors • 72% of children in foster care are not ready for kindergarten? When do you collect that data? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) happens when they begin kindergarten. • Where is the current education and outreach to parents to help them understand kindergarten readiness and where to find resources in the community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Department of Health (DOH) gives documents to families post birth. • 40% of kids at or less than 110% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) are Kindergarten ready. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual Education Accounts (IEAs/529s) make teachers and school districts compete for their salaries and benefits to hold them to metrics.
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to Sarah Veele (sarah.veele@dcyf.wa.gov) and Catherine Wilson (Catherine.wilson@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow up questions.

Community Agreements

Members began exploring Community Agreements.

<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Community Agreements are the way we want to show up together.</p> <p>Agreements are an aspiration, or collective vision, for how we want to be in relationship with one another. They are explicitly developed and enforced by the group, not by an external authority, and as such must represent a consensus.</p> <p><i>What do you need from everyone in this space to feel respected, supported, open and trusting so that we can work together to improve outcomes for youth and families in Washington? – The National Equity Project</i></p> <p>Aspire to a space that nurtures the emotional health of each other/Relational Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful of time and space. Allow others a chance to speak. Create space for those who don't speak often or are shy. • Acknowledge change behavior. • Disagree with open-mindedness, curiosity, and compassion • Avoid antagonism. • Let each member be heard. • Land acknowledgement • Be respectful to different views • What's said here stays here, but the wisdom leaves.
--------------------------	--



- Bring laughter.
- Be respectful and conscious of triggering language and actions.
- Give everyone grace.
- Be aware of the impact your words and intent may have on others.
- Be open to being held accountable for your actions.
- Apologize when you have caused harm.
- Respect others' perspectives, values, and opinions. Everyone should feel supported.
- Recognize and embrace friction. It's okay to disagree.
- Use active listening.
- Speak only from your experiences, not from others. Use "I" statements.
- It's okay to ask for clarification.
- Leave judgement at the door.
- Turn on curiosity and be a learner.
- Q-TIP: Quit taking it personal.
- We are all from different backgrounds
- Each meeting is a new beginning.
- Be mindful of who is invited and make sure they understand our "rules" and are respectful of us.
- No shaming, no blaming.

Operational Agreements:

- Include virtual attendees in conversation.
- Break down policy language in a way where we can understand what it means for parents/caregivers.
- Land acknowledgement
- End on time
- Who do we want to hear from? Let us have choices.
- Be mindful of different learning abilities.
- Acknowledge that these conversations can be triggering and let everyone know they can step away.
- No acronyms without spelling them out.
- In order to stay on task, can we have a stop sign at each table?
- Allow everyone a chance to speak.
- Stay on topic.
- Provide specific ways for people to provide more feedback.
- No cursing.
- Appropriate, professional language (no cursing)

Other Meeting Suggestions

- Ensure virtual attendees can be included in the conversation
- Slow down the conversation to allow processing
- Provide Land Acknowledgement
- Break down policy language in a way where we can understand what it means for parents/caregivers.
- Have agenda items related to specific concerns and then invite that expert/department.
- Carve out time in the schedule for people to share general concerns.
- Have a blank space/poster board for people to share resources.
- Possible Follow Up Topics: -licensing/placement issues, - special needs kiddos, -education readiness or support, - support services (needs, access, issues), - other (parking lot)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide slides and other materials in advance
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to the Community Engagement team (dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Charter Development

Members reviewed and provided edits to the PAG Charter.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What’s covered under child welfare? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The foster care system, Child Protective Services (CPS), kinship care, group care, and the licensing of those. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DCYF partners with the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). • What does a two-way communicator entail? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ideally PAG represent parents across the state. Individually you have your own experiences and opinions, but you can also share the experiences and opinions of other parents in your network. Then what you hear from these meetings, you share with your communities and networks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We don’t have any formal expectations on how you fulfill your role and how you engage with your communities and bring that to PAG meetings. ▪ It’s based on what you feel comfortable doing. Some bring information to ECEAP meetings or Parent Ambassador meetings, Poverty Reduction Steering Committee, Behavioral Health Board, PTA meetings etc. • What is the purpose of the Executive Committee? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detailed information will be sent out to the group, but in general it is for meeting planning. • When did PAG become all about foster care? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The intent is not to be about foster care. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We need to focus on all children and families. • HB 1227, DCYF needs to provide services and resources to families before children are removed from the home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Olive Crest is a resource for voluntary child respite/support with host families. • Is our primary function to impact the experience of parents and caregivers or is it also to impact the experience of the kids and their ability to engage? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The intent of PAG is to make sure the policies at the state level reflect the experiences of parents. • When inviting DCYF staff into the room, we need to be aware of power dynamics.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to the Community Engagement team (dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Community Compensation Decision Package

DCYF Deputy Director of Community Engagement, Emily Grossman led the group in a review of DCYF’s Decision Package regarding Community Compensation

- [Community Compensation Decision Package Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here is a tool to find your elected representatives. • Income should not be a factor in deciding whether advisory group members are compensated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We understand that federal poverty levels are outdated. The living wage index would be better, but we are limited by the legislation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I think it should be indexed to MIT Living Wage Calculator for a person’s area and household composition.
-------------------	---



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They won't look at your income. They don't ask for it. They are compensating you for your time for your lived experience.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How did they put a price on lived experience? The system is broken.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We could not put a price on it. But to pass the bill, they had to put a number on it.• How many members do we have in this group?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 43 members as of today. This group can discuss attendance requirements and if they want to include that in the charter.• Couldn't we allow DSHS beneficiaries volunteer to a lottery to be chosen for these? That way, the financial fraud could be minimized.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes, that method would be effective to reduce fraud. However, restricting advisory group membership to DSHS beneficiaries would reduce the diversity of our lived experts- our goal is to be inclusive and have broad representation.• Can we set up an invitation to invite our legislators to our group this year to discuss these issues?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes, we can definitely invite them.• Federal Poverty Level information and charts
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please reach out to Emily Grossman (Emily.grossman@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

2023 Meetings, Closing Remarks, and Adjourn

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our next meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2023.
-------------------	---