FAMILY CONNECTIONS OREGON
Task Force January 22, 2014 Meeting Notes

Task Force members present at meeting:
Laurie Price Oregon Department of Human Services, Senior Federal Policy Analyst
Katharine Cahn PSU, Child Welfare Partnership, Executive Director
Marty Lowrey Portland State University, Child Welfare Partnership
Director Workforce Development
Pam Bergreen Oregon DHS District 8, Jackson County Program Manager
Leah Skipworth [attending for Sandy Bumpus] National Federation for Families
Director of Oregon Program
Darline D’Angelo Oregon DHS, Douglas County DHS-Child Welfare Manager
Tanya Ferguson Morrison Family Center, Family Leadership
NeCola Henderson Morrison Family Center, Family Leadership
Elizabeth Hisatake Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Indian Reservation
Child Protective Services Supervisor
Maurita Johnson Oregon DHS, Deputy Director Office of Child Welfare Programs
Nadja Jones Oregon Department of Human Services, Tribal Affairs Director
Jennifer Kelly Morrison Family Center, Family Leadership
Ted Keys Community Member (Formerly: DHS Office of Safety & Permanency)
Sherril Kuhns Oregon Department of Human Services, Federal Compliance/Systems of Care
Stacy Lake Oregon Department of Human Services, Differential Response/Safety Manager
Lisa Lewis Oregon Department of Human Services, Douglas County-District 6 Manager
Shary Mason Juvenile Court Programs, Oregon Judicial Department, JCIP Model Court and Training Analyst
Kristi Petite The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Timothy Phipps Morrison Family Center
John Radich Oregon Department of Human Services, Lane County/District Manager
Ruth Taylor Morrison Family Center
Dixie Yagle Morrison Family Center, Family Leadership
Jason Walling Oregon DHS, Innovations Manager, Office of Child Welfare Programs
PSU staff: Susie Barrios, Kellie Herold, Carrie Furrer, Jennifer Blakeslee, Angela Rodgers, Kristin Chappell, Michelle Warden

Guests present at the meeting:
Rob Ensign Options
Tina Trotter Lane County DHS/Family Connections Coordinator
Amanda Genus Options/Family Connections Coordinator in Multnomah County

Unable to attend:
Amy Baker Children’s Mental Health System Manager, Oregon Health Authority
Angie Blackwell Youth and Family Advocate
Joel Broussard Oregon Department of Human Services, District 2 Community Liaison
Aniko Campbell Oregon Department of Human Services, Community Engagement
Margaret Carter Community member, former DHS Director of Community Engagement
Rene DuBoise Oregon Department of Human Services, Douglas County-Child Welfare Manager
Carolyn Graf Private contractor
Melissa Sampson-Grier Oregon DHS, Safe & Equitable Reduction of Foster Care
Sonja Olsen-Hasek Oregon DHS-CW Federal Compliance, Policy Analyst
Rhonda Helser Volunteers of America
Leslie Johnson Oregon Department of Human Services, District 2 Family Services Unit Manager
Sarah Kopplin Catholic Community Services
I. Welcome & Introductions / Overview of the Day

Katharine Cahn briefly reviewed the background of the grant. Oregon is a recognized national leader in Family Meetings and Family Find. Now the goal is to make those practices sustainable and consistently available statewide. Family Connections is a two-prong program. First, test early and combined FF and FGC to see if it produces better outcomes, especially in child well-being at 3 sites in Douglas, Lane and Multnomah. Secondly, it is the job of the task force is to make the system and infrastructures necessary to implement this statewide.

Review agenda and plan for the day: Marty Lowrey

Welcome by Jason Walling, Innovations Manager, Oregon DHS Child Welfare Programs. Jason talked about the importance of the Family Connections project because family engagement is critical to the work that DHS does. Family Connections is in alignment with other DHS initiatives including Differential Response, Safe & Equitable Reduction of Foster Care, and Oregon Safety Model.

II. Key Stakeholder Interviews: Update on Implementation of the Intervention

Evaluation Team Report by Carrie Furrer

To date, the FCO Evaluation Team has collected data from multiple sources, including interviews with Family Connections Coordinators and DHS leaders at each pilot site, site visits, team meeting notes, and program documents).

- Report on implementation at the three intervention sites of Douglas, Lane, and Multnomah. Began in late August to identify intervention families. From late August 2013-January 2014: 43 families identified; 15 randomly assigned to the intervention and 28 to the control group families. Cases were identified as those where a child was placed out of home care in the past week and was likely to be in care for more than 60 days.
- High rate of intervention families agreeing to participate in evaluation; lower rate for control group families
- Have conducted 5 Family Group Conferences, including all family find and family engagement services
- Average is 84 days from the day the child was placed in care to conducting the family group conference; exceeds the 60-day target
- Reasons why the number of intervention families are lower than expected:
  - Fewer children placed in out-of-home care than the year before
  - Implementation issues such as:
    - Slower start-up than anticipated – needed more work installing practice in branches
    - Case progression slower than anticipated - challenges bringing family members to the table
- Tina Trotter [Family Connections Coordinator in Lane County] said there is an education component to bringing other workers along with the idea of combined FF and FGC. Now caseworkers asking for it for the cases. Change in practice always takes time to build momentum
- Fewer FGC’s conducted due to family engagement challenges
  - Birth parents are often resistant to having extended family come to the table, especially if they don’t have a relationship
  - Can be an uncomfortable process for birth parents
  - Tina Trotter shared that previous meetings with families usually only had average of 3 family and with FCO there have been as many as 15. This process is also bringing in more Fathers, many previously absent. This is all challenging and takes time and makes it tough to do it within 60 days
  - Issue: some workers are resistant to a pre-jurisdiction meeting
  - Caseworkers are hesitant to move forward before the court has mandated anything, Tina Trotter has been trying to do this so the family can go into court with a plan that they developed
  - In Douglas county FCO met with all of the attorneys and the Judge. They were supportive of the FGC and taking into consideration the plan that the family develops
- Additional feedback regarding implementation challenges:
  - Challenges facing Leadership:
    - Initiative fatigue
    - Staff turnover (also identified as an opportunity to train new staff in family-centered practice)
    - Ongoing communication with staff
    - Promoting culture shift toward family-centered work
  - Leadership involvement promotes implementation
    - Support for initiative and family-centered work
    - Promote communication
    - Available to troubleshoot implementation issues
Allocate resources to the FCO Coordinator

- Challenges to Caseworker involvement
  - Concern about giving families power (or relinquishing control when they feel the weight of the case is on their shoulders)
  - View FCO intervention as redundant with work already being done
  - Not “seeing” work done by FCO coordinator

- Caseworker Involvement Promotes Implementation
  - Generally support FCO initiative
  - Value family-centered work

- Key FCO Coordinator Characteristics
  - Established relationship/trust
  - Knowledge of DHS work by contracted Coordinators
  - Presence at the branch/availability
  - Perceived by families as separate from DHS
    - Tina Trotter/internal DHS coordinator commented that she doesn’t feel like being internal is negatively impacting her ability to engage families
    - Angela Rodgers/PSU Researcher commented that the research indicates that the important thing is that the Coordinator (whether internal or external) is skilled at engaging the family and conveying the message that the family will be participating in the planning for the child
    - Amanda Genus/contracted Coordinator says she believes that it helps to be a non-DHS representative when trying to engage families

- The six-month interviews with families will give us their perspective on engagement
  - FCO coordinator support impacts implementation success [necessary supports include: training, coaching, clinical supervision, branch installation, caseworker collaboration, DHS supervisor support, and leadership oversight]
  - Stacy Lake/DHS Differential Response - commented that in Texas they collected information by branch to see who was actually doing the FGC and then could assess if there was enough support systematically
  - Jason Walling/DHS Innovations Manager - said a clearly defined and clearly communicated scope of work for the engagement and meeting is critical – so the practice is consistent
- Maurita Johnson – commenting on family engagement. How are we connecting FCO to other practice and initiatives? How are we connecting them and describing how FCO relates to Oregon Safety Model, Differential Response, or SPERTH? How can it fit within current practice model?
- John Radich/Lane DHS – said that new practices are tough for the field unless it is making the work they already do easier. There is initiative fatigue

III. Implementing the Intervention: A Family Success Story
Susie Barrios/Family Connections Trainer shared a family story that illustrates the success of family engagement work happening as a result of Family Connections program.

IV. Task Force Subcommittees - Progress Reports
- Laurie Price – Infrastructure subcommittee facilitator
  ▪ This subcommittee is strategizing about making combined FF/FGC practice happen on a statewide basis
  ▪ Laying the foundation to pick a model
  ▪ Exploring how to continue funding for positions once grant ends
  ▪ Access to OR-Kids for external contractors and have developed a temporary solution
  ▪ Development of a way to track FF and FGC activities in the OR-Kids data system
  ▪ Exploring the implications of internal vs external positions, including financial and policy implications of each
  ▪ Laurie requested that the Task Force members be a champion for this effort – this is not a separate new thing, it is a thing part of all the other work we do.
- Katharine Cahn – Systems Engagement subcommittee facilitator
  ▪ The main work of this subcommittee is to ensure the family meetings are part of all DHS initiatives such as: Differential Response; Oregon Safety Model; Safe & Equitable Reduction of Foster Care; and mental health
  ▪ Strategizing on how to get our initiative incorporated into the other initiatives. Example: Shary mason is involved in judicial education – she is exploring how this can be incorporated within the model court processes
  ▪ Family engagement is at the heart of all of the current DHS initiatives
  ▪ The policy packages are getting organized for next legislative session
- All engagement is local – partner with district managers and supervisors. Feb district manager meeting – presenting FCO
- Marty Lowrey – Model & Workforce Development subcommittees
  - Both model and workforce development subcommittees combined because the conversations were so parallel
  - Have had two separate and one combined meeting
  - Subcommittee has a grid of what issues need to be addressed
  - Today the subcommittee will be working on making some decisions (with parent voice input) about where to go next
  - ✓ What does the DHS leadership message need to be to move forward
  - ✓ What does family involvement really look like
  - ✓ What are the different elements of FF including ongoing FF
  - ✓ What does model look like that is consistent across state yet local customization
  - ✓ Fidelity – what are core pieces
  - ✓ Qualifications of coordinator positions
  - ✓ If the model is combined, does it change the skill set?

V. Family Leadership – Jennifer Kelly, Parent Leader, Morrison Center
Progress on the development of statewide family voice association
- Have developed a curriculum to train parent leadership in Pendleton and Ontario and Multnomah. Highlights of curriculum: identify parent leadership qualities and skills. Goal is to have family voice informing practice and policy on all levels.
- In March will be training in Albany. Working on building the statewide network, what will the roles be in their local communities; build local advisories at each site; talk with Lois Day about her goals and wishes for statewide network.
- Katharine congratulated them on laying the foundation for statewide parent leadership. 4-E waiver and FCO sites will be exploring cross over to keep growing into Douglas and Lane; expand beyond just parent mentor.

VI. Subcommittee meetings
The notes from each subcommittee meeting can be found on the Family Connections subcommittee - google site
## VII. Evaluation and closing comments

### Task Force Check-In Jan ‘14

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Avg Score (range)</th>
<th>% Unknown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a clear sense of the vision and principles of the Family Connections Task Force</td>
<td>3.2 (1-4)</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>My experience is that Family Connections Task Force members are working together constructively to set a plan for sustainable practice</td>
<td>3.4 (3-4)</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Since the last Task Force meeting in September, I have a clearer sense of my roles and responsibilities as a Task Force member</td>
<td>3.1 (2-4)</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
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<td>I have had opportunities to move this project forward in my other work</td>
<td>3.2 (2-4)</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I know enough about what other Family Connections Subcommittees are doing</td>
<td>2.8 (1-4)</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
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Response scale: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree

Overall, Task Force members agreed that they have a clear vision of the Family Connections initiative and that there has been progress in their work to set a plan for sustainable practice. Task Force members most strongly agreed that people are working together constructively, but there was less agreement on whether they knew what other subcommittees are doing. A number of Task Force members attended this meeting, which contributed to the “unknown” ratings for having a clearer sense of roles and responsibilities and moving the project forward outside of the Task Force.