

OFFICE OF COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Proposed Workgroup Charter

Workgroup Title: Family Engagement in the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA)

Proposed by: Charlotte McNulty

Proposal Date: October 9, 2009

Charter

As authorized by the State Executive Council (SEC) on September 24, 2009, the purpose of this workgroup is to develop recommendations for changes or clarifications of CSA policy that would:

- Increase the active involvement of family members and youth in the assessment, service planning, placement decision making, and service delivery processes of CSA
- Improve family members' and youth's satisfaction with CSA services, and their knowledge and understanding of both CSA processes and the specific goals of their Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs)
- Increase the utilization of family engagement practices by Family Assessment and Planning Teams (FAPTs) throughout the Commonwealth

The workgroup will provide the SEC with a progress report on its work at the December 2009 SEC meeting, and will present its final recommendations at the March 2010 SEC meeting.

To accomplish these goals, the workgroup is requested to investigate and develop recommendations in the following specific areas. The workgroup is not limited to these areas, and is invited to address additional topics as it deems necessary to accomplish the goals. The workgroup should prioritize recommendations for policies and practices:

- that are consistent with the principles of the Children's Services System Practice Model,
- that minimize duplication and inconsistency between CSA practices and those of other child-serving agencies,
- that will have the effect of reducing FAPT caseloads and streamlining FAPT processes (per SB 1181),
- that are supported by evidence of their feasibility and effectiveness, and
- for which model programs and/or policy language can be found that will help to facilitate their implementation.

Area 1: State Support for Local Family Engagement Efforts

The SEC and OCS can provide a policy context and technical support to help localities adopt family engagement practices. Among the state-level measures the workgroup should consider are the following:

- Issue a policy statement that establishes family engagement as a required element of CSA, on a par with other foundations of CSA such as multidisciplinary, cross-agency planning and provision of child-specific services
- Develop guidance for localities on how to:
 - Structure family engagement meeting facilitation and/or family advocacy as a child-specific service
 - Retain family members and community resources as providers of services on an IFSP
 - Reimburse family members for the costs of participating in family-engaging CSA processes
- Collect statewide data on family engagement practices (through CANS, the CSA Data Set, and the Utilization Management process)
- Incorporate the results of family satisfaction surveys and other feedback into OCS' utilization review and utilization management processes
- Build statewide capacity to implement family engagement practices, including:
 - Increasing the availability and quality of training on family meeting facilitation and other key competencies
 - Develop a state certification process, and/or identify existing certification processes, for family meeting facilitation that will enable CPMTs to specify qualifications for providers of this service
- Assist VDSS in developing policy and local guidance for VAFEM that minimizes redundancy and maximizes consistency across DSS and CSA policy on family engagement

Area 2: CPMT Policies That Empower Families

Community Policy and Management Teams (CPMTs) can adopt local policies that empower families and children receiving CSA services, and that more rigorously and consistently include the perspectives of those children and families in planning, evaluating and administering the local CSA system. CPMT policies that the workgroup should consider recommending include:

- Requiring that specified key family members, youth who are old enough to participate, and important individuals identified by the family:
 - Must be present at and participate in service planning and decision making meetings at all key points in the lifecycle of a CSA case, including initial referral to FAPT, initial placement and service plan development, periodic review, placement or service plan change, pre-discharge

- Must be involved to the maximum feasible extent in assessing their strengths and needs, planning and delivering services to meet their needs, and assessing the quality and effectiveness of those services
- Providing resources for their FAPTs to adopt family engagement practices, including:
 - Ability to procure family meeting facilitation and parent advocacy as child-specific services that are eligible for funding through the CSA pool
 - Ability to reimburse family members for expenses associated with participation in FAPT (e.g. travel expenses)
 - Criteria under which family members, and/or community members (non-professionals or paraprofessionals) selected by the family, can be paid to provide services as part of the child's IFSP
- Requiring that their localities' family needs assessment, community needs assessment, service quality evaluation, and utilization review processes must incorporate feedback from family members and youth
- Provide clear appeal and dispute resolution procedures to resolve family member complaints about CSA services on a timely, consistent basis across CSA-involved agencies
- Adopt consistent policies on confidentiality and information-sharing regarding children and families involved with CSA, regardless of the agency managing their case or from which they were referred

Area 3: FAPT Practices That Facilitate Family Participation

CPMTs can adopt procedures for their FAPTs, and direct their FAPTs to adopt practices, that make it easier for family members and youth to participate in the needs assessment, placement and service planning, and service quality assessment work involving their own CSA case. FAPT practices the workgroup should consider include:

- Supporting agency efforts to identify, locate and reach out to family members who are or could potentially become a resource for CSA children and their families
- Maximizing family participation in FAPT service planning and decision making
 - Providing notice, inviting, and preparing family members for effective participation in FAPT meetings
 - Conducting meetings at community locations, and at times outside of regular business hours that are convenient for family members
 - Providing mechanisms that allow FAPT members to participate in meetings remotely (or by proxy or by consent agenda) when necessary to accommodate family member schedules
- Ensuring family voice and effective participation in FAPT process
 - Using a trained facilitator to ensure that FAPT meetings, or other meetings involving family members that may produce decisions or recommendations that would impact the IFSP, effectively engage families

- Using a designated family advocate to help prepare children and family members for participation in FAPT process, and to help mentor and support them through the process
- Adopting norms of behavior that encourage family members to speak up and that ensure concerns raised by family members are addressed
- Thoroughly documenting meetings to ensure that issues raised and decisions made are captured in the case record, and to provide data for ongoing quality assurance
- Minimize redundancy of meetings
 - Use consent agenda procedures so that attention can be focused during FAPT meetings on the most complex cases that require intensive, multi-disciplinary attention
 - Integrate FAPT process with agency-specific processes, e.g. for children receiving CSA-funded services who under custody or supervision of DSS, identify VAFEM required meetings at which FAPT decision-making authority would be needed and arrange for required FAPT participants (who are not already VAFEM participants) to participate remotely or through a consent agenda

Proposed Workgroup Membership:

Name	Title / Affiliation	Contact phone	Contact email
	Representatives of all FAPT members:		
	Local CSB		
Janine Sewell	Local DSS		
Robert Wade	Local CSU		
	Local Schools		
Carrie Hartwell	Provider		
Vicki hardy Murrell	Parent – DOE/IEP		
Robert and Midge Price	Parent – DSS/IFSP		
	Parent – non-mandated/IFSP		
Priscilla Barnes (?) Alice Reynolds (?)	Current or former foster youth?		
Tamara Temoney	State DSS		
Charlotte McNulty Dawn Howard	State OCS		
	State Court Improvement Project		
Rebecca Paris	CSA Coordinator		

Next Steps

- *[Proposed meeting schedule, other?]*