**Permanency Enhancement Project**

**The Baby Fold - 612 Oglesby Normal, IL.**

MINUTES – May 21, 2014

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Present:** Chris Schrick, Bill Gordon, Moe Jallow, Doris Houston, Cathy Smith, Rob Schiffman, Beth Seggebruch, DeeAnn Ryan, Cynthia Richter-Jackson, Pamela Perrilles, Robert Blackwell, Michael Burns, Marilyn Giles, Karen Blum, Maria Miller, Jackie crane, Angela Hassell, Sari Rowitz, DarylLynn Danvers, Jill Lautemann, Jean Marlow, Gail Hopper, Denise Flores

**Cathy Smith (Regional Administrator)** – updates

Central Region has been busy preparing for the Springfield COA review. We finished in Bloomington and did really well. Jim Craven retired at the end of April and we currently have a coverage plan in place. Rob Schiffman returned to child protection as a supervisor in Peoria last week and that AA position is also currently vacant. AA Beth Seggebruch and Jim Marmion are picking up responsibility for Peoria/Pekin and AA Maria Miller, Gayle Hopper, and Susan Jensen are responsible for Springfield /Lincoln/Taylorville. Quality Assurance has filled Deanna Large’s position with Jeff Haley. Toxicology issues are having an impact statewide as we are experiencing delays in achieving permanencies because of screening delays for parents

**CHAMPAIGN** Sub-region 3B

**Bloomington – Co-Leaders: Jim Marmion & Karen Blum.** This group meets quarterly and has focused on timely adoptions. A problem with finalizing adoptions was brought to the attention of the Juvenile Judge. He has been active in remedying the issue. The mediation project has been slow, because intake is slow; however, the Judge has loosened the criteria for eligibility so this may help the project move forward. The Judge has been upset about the toxicology delays and has stated he may begin “finding for unreasonable efforts”. August 11 is the next mtg date and they will be reviewing the permanency data at that time.

**Charleston – Leader: Susan Taylor** - Maria Miller reporting for Susan. The group met with Doris Houston at the end of Feb to brainstorm ideas for building on the 2-day workshop they had presented “Bridges Out of Poverty”. They sent a survey to previous action team members to solicit ideas. Their last meeting was held on May 19 with good attendance. They discussed increasing membership. They have currently scheduled brown bag lunches in June at the Cole County Courthouse and in July they will do the same in Edgar County (Paris)

There is an event for Paris planned in Sept. The Regional Superintendent of Schools is very involved and a good partner. They are doing a Resource Fair at the school. They want to begin with this event in Paris because Paris has the highest poverty levels. 53% of children in the school district are at or below poverty levels. Second on the list for the Resource Fair event is Mattoon as it is second highest poverty.

Doris Houston stated that schools tend to over-report, according to the data. Sanford and QA staff will be asked to provide data regarding trends in Edgar Co. Jackie Crane stated that she recently attended a big summit in Winnebago Co in the Northern Region. One of the issues was regarding reporting. The summit was funded by an $18,000.00 grant monies from the AOIC. A judge spoke first and saw no disproportionality. Doris’s university counterpart then spoke and clarified that there is in actuality significant disproportionality. Doris hopes information will be on the PEP website. She states they have not received their funding for FY 2014 yet. Since January, there really has been nothing new added to the Website.

Jackie also discussed and reviewed the “Care Enough to Call Brochure”.

**Danville – Co-leaders: Beth Seggebruch and DeeAnn Ryan.** Since the Judge retired in Vermillion County, there is so longer a Family Treatment Court. The County has a high rate of substance abuse. Family Recovery Support (FRS) is a program that focuses on bridging the gap between parents and the court. Currently the Judge in Vermillion Co requires parents to “drop” before seeing their children. This Judge also wants foster parents to “drop” before children are placed with them. Danville (in Vermillion Co) is known as Meth Valley. There is an enormous drug problem. “Celebrate Families” is a program that brings a family together for a family meal, with the parents then meeting in a group, and children also meeting as a support group.

Bob Blackwell stated that he did spend time with the Vermillion Co Judge the other day, and is interested in ideas of what kinds of resources can be used to inform this Judge? What is legal counsel saying about issues? Beth responded that the Dept’s Legal Counsel is aware, but she does not know if there has been any filing on specific case issues. Cathy Smith stated maybe we need to revisit this issue and use legal. Beth will reach out to Janet Ahearn. DeeAnn Ryan stated that the best way to engage this Judge is through offering solutions. Bob questioned whether there is research out there to help address this issue? DeeAnn believes that we need an ‘Evidence Based Model”. This Judge already attended the Bench card training but it did not seem to impact her beliefs or opinions. Cathy asked do we have Parent Advisory Groups to assist families and advocate within the community? Beth thought that the whole "dropping" foster parents would be an issue with the foster parent’s advisory council. Sari Rowitz recommended direct contact with the Birth Parent Councils. This is an ideal issue for them to take on as an educational issue. Sari stated that there is a Statewide Birth Parent Council. Also Sam Gillespie is a point person for a possible grant and program called “Family Recovery Coach Program. These grant monies can also be used to educate Judges and it is evidence based. It appears the Judge is disillusioned with private agencies and community agencies. Some actions to consider:

1. Connect with Daniel Fitzgerald about developing an FAC in Danville
2. The Rockford Birth Parent Council is exclusively working with the Treatment Center in Rockford. This council has been very active. It might be of benefit to use this Model in Danville.
3. Also the legislative folks are more attentive right now
4. Jackie also recommended Greg Cox, who is a former birth parent, and works with “Be Strong Families” He is a great support and advocate.

**Decatur – Leader: Celeste Taylor** - Maria Miller reporting. The last meeting was held in March and the next meeting is scheduled for August 21. There have been some changes in leadership. Kim Taylor (who is also a new member of the Transformation Team) is stepping up to co-lead the action team. The Team is currently experiencing an increasing partnership with the FAC, and someone from there will be the other co lead. There has also been a Parent’s Council formed that meets at the FAC. They recently held a summit with 8 parents attending.

**Urbana – Leader: Angela Hassell** “Putting Our Families Back Together” program has had positive outcomes, but attendance has recently been in a slump. They are doing some marketing to reach and inform potential participants. They have found that some court personnel are not especially supportive to parents, so they are using this outreach program to empower parents. They are currently reaching out to private agencies and churches and would like to see this program mandated, because the outcomes are so good. They also have a Parent’s Council (same as Partnering with Parents) that has revived.

**PEORIA** Sub-region 1B

**Canton / Macomb: Co-leaders: Jean Marlow & POS representative.** The meetings are held monthly. QA Cynthia Richter-Jackson recently presented the Data PowerPoint that was well received. McDonough Co is a pilot site for the Court improvement data project. This data will be available in September at which time Cynthia will also return and share the FY 14 data. ‘First Responder Training” was completed and Judge Walton was pleased with this. Of note is that the Adoption Panel attorney is retiring.

**Galesburg/Monmouth: Co-leaders: Jean Marlow & New Supervisor** Meetings are held quarterly. There is a new juvenile judge. He has requested training for workers on writing court reports and testifying in court. This is being planned for both DCFS and POS workers. It is hoped that AOIC will fund the training. . QA Cynthia Richter-Jackson shared the Data PowerPoint, with the Judge being less than receptive. He was very focused on poverty being the reason for abuse/neglect cases.

Discussion continued regarding Juvenile Judges being offended by the data presentations for their counties. Bob Blackwell stated that this had also been an issue in Sangamon County but there has been a definite shift in the past year. Bob credits Deanna Large with staying focused on the data and continuing the conversation. Doris Houston stated that it is beneficial to look at comparison counties of similar demographics, as an example McLean and Champaign Counties. Bob stated that Judges talking to Judges is also the best method for informing Judges.

**Ottawa/LaSalle – Co-leaders: Jim Marmion and Denise Flores** This team meets monthly and last met on 5/14/14. The county has a strong CASA. They have also received an AOIC grant and are doing a 2 day program scheduled for July 28 and 29 for “kids of incarcerated parents.” July 9 is the next mtg. POS does attend.

**Peoria – Leader: Pam Perrilles** Pam stated that the team has been stalled, but the last mtg was good and exciting. The public defender attended and is passionate about seeing changes. There was a great turnout with the adoption attorney, juvenile judge and court administrator also present. The team is moving forward with a “Parent’s guide” There was discussion about revising the language in Disposition and visitation orders and coming up with more of a check box format. The Court Administrator is looking into this. The Sangamon County Plan was forwarded to team members and discussed. Feedback and follow-up discussion to come. QA will present data at the next mtg, as well as the Court improvement data will be presented by Mary Bullock, the AOIC consultant doing the data gathering for Peoria. Bob Blackwell, Cathy Smith and Doris Houston are invited and encouraged to attend this meeting if their schedules will allow. August 8 is the next mtg date. On another note, Tazewell County is supposed to be joining this team as well. They have been invited to attend but have chosen not to. Efforts are being made to re-engage these court folks in order to make orders standardized circuit wide.

**Rock Island –Missy Speth** – No report

**SPRINGFIELD** Sub-region 3A

**Carlinville – Co-leaders: Trista Cox & Diana Rapaport** – Jill Lautemann reporting. She is pulling together an invitation list and planning for the first meeting to take place in July or August.

**Jacksonville – Co-leaders: Gayle Hopper & Jill Lautemann** – Gail reported that the last mtg was at the end of March and the next meeting will be in June. They have secured an AOIC grant to have Eugene Griffen to give a presentation on trauma during the month of September. They are also working on a court report face sheet that was first used in Springfield. On June 7 there will be a Foster Parent Appreciation being done by a local church. It has been a struggle to get POS involved as many of the workers are headquartered in Springfield or Quincy. Jill has identified an agency that may be interested in being a Family Advocacy Center for the area. Gail states that Hancock County is in need of an action team mtg as there are some problems with the juvenile judge. She is working to get this started.

It was discussed that Action teams may be a good agenda item for the next POS quarterly mtg and Childcare Association meetings. Jackie will be the point person and discuss each of the regions current action teams. It would be helpful if Doris Houston could attend as well. A question about whether Action Team mtg dates could be posted on the DNET? Michael Burns will check into this.

**Jerseyville – Leader: Mary Crawford** – Jill Lautemann reporting. This group is up and meeting regularly.

**Lincoln –Leader: Cince Bowns** – No report

**Springfield – Co-leaders: Judge Sanchez & Deanna Large** – Cathy Smith reporting by referring to the minutes. On September 12 there will be a community presentation with Dr Griffin. The focus is on educators. The next mtg is scheduled for June 16 and they will be highlighting their team process for COA reviewers.

**Sari Rowitz (Resource & Recruitment) – Statewide updates.** They currently have two position openings with one in Peoria and one in Rock Island. There are currently challenges in Rock Island. The recruiter is writing up an action plan for doing some targeting recruitment efforts. Royal Family Kids Kamp is an organization that assists churches in sponsoring summer camp for both DCFS and POS kids. This is also a good resource for recruitment efforts. The Beardstown recruiter has developed a basic PowerPoint to use for recruitment. Data reports are being used across the state to identify recruitment needs. However, there are varying reports being used. There needs to be specific and standard reports that are used. Transformation Team members will be meeting with Sari to review recruitment materials in a somewhat consultant role in regards to language that promotes fairness, equality, etc. It is important for recruitment efforts to interface with action teams and transformation teams. Sari stated they are also asking themselves how do we support casework staff in addressing barriers? Permanency Achievement Specialists are currently looking at permanency goals each quarter and tracking barriers to achieving permanency. At this time, the biggest barrier appears to be legal, as in adjudications not being timely or Judges individual beliefs, actions and/or orders.

**Dr. Doris Houston - University updates.** The main focus has been the partnership with the African American Council annual conference and institute. Steve Perry is the keynote speaker for the event. The theme for this year is Supporting Foster Youth and Educational Outcomes. There will be a Youth Panel and afternoon workshops. The conference is scheduled for June 6 at the ISU Bone Student Center. There is no cost to those registering for the event. The next University Partner meeting, with Bob Blackwell, Michael Burns and Joan Nelson Phillips, will be on May 28. Doris has also developed and delivered training for CASA volunteers focused on diversity. She has also participated in training for the Judges, sponsored by AOIC, that focused on data.

**Michael Burns – Statewide updates** Michael has met with AOIC to discuss utilizing grant monies. July and August is the time for action teams to submit their grant requests. Requests must be court related and can be for as much as $10,000.00.

**Announcements / Other Business**

* There are current efforts to get a Transformation Team started in the Northern region.
* The Central Region Youth Summit is scheduled for June 26 at the ISU Bone Student Center.

**Upcoming meetings:** **August 6th** & **November 5th** @ The Baby Fold