



A FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD
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Department of Human Services

Attn: Ms. Lois Day, Director
Child Welfare
500 Summer St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301
Lois.Day@state.or.us

April 7, 2014

Dear Ms. Day:

I am writing regarding the increased focus in DHS procedure to support family engagement within the Differential Response Model. As you know, the mission of Eugene-based A Family For Every Child (AFFEC) is to find loving, permanent families for every waiting foster child. The family engagement piece of Differential Response is very much in line with AFFEC's Family Finding Program.

Our Family Finding Program is based on the Kevin Campbell model and delivers consistently comprehensive family-finding results. We use intensive, diligent, latest-technology techniques, combined with in-depth personal engagement to build a circle of supportive kin and kith for each child in our program. Although we provide services for both back-end and front-end cases, we are clear that the sooner family engagement occurs, the better the outcomes for kids and families.

Over the past several years, we have encountered surprising resistance from Lane DHS in accepting our family-finding services, which are offered to Lane DHS for free. This is why we were especially encouraged when seeing the enclosed DHS Procedure Manual update, which at Chapter 4, Section 3, defines a dramatic increase in the family-finding actions to be performed for each child in care. Although not entirely at the same level as our Kevin Campbell family-finding model, the new procedure is a gratifying and welcomed advancement in bringing increased familial support to children first entering care. Your emphasis on family engagement within the Differential Response model indicates your understanding as to just how effective family engagement can be in improving outcomes for children and families.

After the release of the new Differential Response procedures, we met with Mr. John Radich to discuss how Lane DHS was doing in implementing the new procedure, and Mr. Radich replied that he was not aware of the new procedure; he deferred to his staff and relied on their knowing about it and dealing with it as needed. We followed up in separate correspondence with Ms. Julie Spencer of Lane DHS, a copy of which correspondence is enclosed for your easy reference. From Ms. Spencer's response we are given to understand that implementation of the new procedure is apparently at the discretion of local-area DHS workers.

Our research and experience have shown that family engagement is one of the most productive efforts we collectively can do to provide a pathway to permanency and options for families in distress. We also agree with your directive that implementing comprehensive family engagement will be key to the success of Differential Response and that the efforts made early-on to identify and engage family and kith is a proven, cost-effective approach which results in better outcomes for children and families.

Christy Obie-Barrett
Executive Director

Linzy Munger
Associate Director

Susie Trahan
Michelle Knutson
Carrie Gilliland
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PROGRAMS

Heart Gallery
Child Specific Recruitment
Heart Gallery Adoption Agency
Website
Mentor Program
Family Building Program
Family Finding Program
Business Advocate Program
Life Bookers
Family Matching Program

Accordingly, we are puzzled as to why the family-finding-friendly DHS procedure manual change would not be welcomed and immediately incorporated into use in every DHS area. The fact that AFFEC offers its Family Finding Program to DHS for free would seem to mitigate any budgetary reasons not to follow the new procedure.

We would appreciate your insights into this matter and would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to strategize about the best approach for us to implement family engagement in Lane County and throughout the state. Our program and its staff and volunteers are eager and ready to increase our services for children in Lane County. Ultimately, we all want what is in the best possible interests of children in or about to enter foster care.

We are grateful for your touch upon the system generally and for your touch upon Differential Response in particular. Thank you for your good work and we look forward to hearing from you about how to proceed.

Respectfully,

A FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH', with a large, stylized loop extending downwards from the end of the signature.

By Martin Hall, President
AFFEC Board of Directors

MSH:fm
Enclosures

CBObie@aol.com

Mar
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to julie.spencer

[Click here: http://www.dhs.state.or.us/caf/safety_model/procedure_manual/ch04/ch4-section3.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/caf/safety_model/procedure_manual/ch04/ch4-section3.pdf)

Julie,

This is an updated section of the procedure manual that came out on January 1, 2014. When we met with John last week he had not seen the update, so I wanted to send it over just in case you have not as well, I understand how many procedure, process, etc.. you have to keep up with. This one is significant to us as it is the first time we have really seen Family Finding / Family Search spelled out in such detail. We also understand, to follow this procedure, would be a substantial task for DHS, and are hoping it is an opportunity for more Family Finding referrals to come to AFFEC.

Thank-you,

Christy

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mar tin hall Thank you for writing this, Christy. Please share her response if you get one...Mar 3

CBObie@aol.com Will do!

Mar
3



SPENCER Julie julie.spencer@state.or.us

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to cbobie, caitlin, mshft

Christy

Thanks for forwarding and yes I am familiar with this. Its an update to the procedure manual which is a tool caseworkers can use to assist them in understanding and following policy. The policy that drives this procedure isn't new and to my knowledge hasn't changed. Seeking out and searching for relatives is a big task as you mention. We in Lane however are fortunate to

have couple of staff positions that are solely dedicated to relative searches. The efforts up front in the beginning of a case when we are still looking at reunification is essential and we really try and put the focus on quickly identifying a relative or a person with significant relationship to be the initial placement so children don't have to go into stranger foster care.

I understand there has been some interest and conversation around family finding and DR cases with possible referrals for the high to moderate needs families where they may be lacking support and early identification could be essential for their success. It's a pretty exciting time in Child Welfare right now and I look forward to further conversations and collaboration around DR. I think we have a significant opportunity as a community to assist in making positive changes with families.

Julie Spencer
Program Manager
Lane County Child Welfare
[541-349-4415](tel:541-349-4415)

DAY Lois

May 12

to RADICH, SPENCER, martin, Caitlin, Christy, Cindy, Jessica, Linzy

Mr. Hall,

Thank you for this communication. I have a long history with AFFEC and appreciate your efforts to connect children with families. In fact, I was in the first trainings done by Kevin Campbell in Lane County side by side with AFFEC staff. I want to respond to your letter and offer some additional information to you. If in my response, I have misunderstood or failed to address your request, please let me know.

The department does have a strong mandate to seek familial resources for children that enter the foster care system. In fact, there is a statutory mandate to do so. The courts make findings on our efforts to locate relatives for children in our system.

I did not read in Julie's email response that efforts to locate relatives for children in the Child Welfare system was optional, or that following our procedures was optional. Rather, she was noting that the procedures were not new and pointed to a group of families that we anticipate interacting with once we begin using the alternate track in our Differential Response system that may benefit from family finding services. These would be families for which we currently are not opening cases, in essence, a new population of families.

At this time, each District has a plan for how they manage to meet the requirements of the statutes and administrative rule. We are participating in a Fostering Connections federal grant with Portland State University, to determine whether search activities can more reliably be met through use of staff or through use of an outside organization. This group will bring the results of their work to the department with a recommendation for statewide implementation.

I appreciate your offer and the wide range of work AFFEC has undertaken. I would recommend you continue to work with Lane management to determine where the best connection between the programs can be made.

Thank you again for your efforts.

Lois Day
Child Welfare Director
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