

MEETING MINUTES
Iowa Differential Response Work Group
April 10, 2012

Location: United Way of Central Iowa, 1111 9th Street, Suite 100, Rooms B/C, Des Moines, IA 50314

Members Present: Julie Allison; Gina Butteris, Kirsten Faisal, Lori Lipscomb, Mike McInroy, Dick Moore, Lori Mozena, Steve Scott, Denise Moore, Dennis Smith, Kathy Thompson, Michele Tilotta, Barb Van Allen, Julie Walton. **Absent:** Kristie Oliver
Facilitator – Caren Kaplan

Pre-Meeting Meeting Handouts: First Batch (April 5, 2012) - - Iowa: New Ways of Protecting Children [Selected Excerpts from: Frank Farrow. (1997). Harvard Executive Session on New Paradigms for Child Protective Services]; IA 1995 CHAPTER 147 CHILD ABUSE AND TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS - S.F. 208; New Directions for Child Protective Services: Supporting Children, Families and Communities through Legislative Reform – National Conference of State Legislatures; Agenda for April 10, 2012 Work Group Meeting; and Minutes of March 19, 2012 Meeting.

Second Batch (April 8, 2012) - - Policy Brief: Family Assessment Response in New York (April 2011); New York State Local Commissioners Memorandum: Family Assessment Response Application/Plan (March 2008); Minnesota Alternative Response/Family Assessment Response Legislative History 1997- 2005; Minnesota Statutes 2011: 626.556 Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors; Differential Response Approach in Child Protective Services: An Analysis of State Legislative Provisions; Funding Differential Response; Power Point Presentation for April 10, 2012 Work Group Meeting.

The meeting began at 1:00p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Work Group members introduced themselves to one another.

Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the minutes was tabled to allow all members an opportunity to review the March 19, 2012 Meeting Minutes.

Between Meeting Discussions

Following the March 19 Meeting, a number of issues were raised by Work Group members via e-mail and small group conversations; it was decided that it was in the best interests of the Work Group to bring these comments and questions to the entire Work Group. Topics discussed included:

- Engaging and Understanding Families
- Keeping People Off/On Child Abuse Registry
- Where do Community Care Services fit? Will there be ways in which Community Care becomes involved with families who are assigned the FAR pathway (see item below)?
- Direct Impacts on Families?
- Data on number of families who refuse assessment?
- Will DR increase or decrease work load for practitioners?
- Key Issues are Agency Culture, Staff Training, and Philosophy
- Concern about DHS Resources – Funding often drives Policy. At this time, resources can be reallocated to respond to the shift.
- Concern about retaining existing policies that are consistent with a differential response system and making certain that it is carried out in practice.

Overview of Iowa's Child Protection System

Mike McInroy provided a presentation on Iowa's child protection system (see attached power point presentation, slides # 4- #15). Iowa has a comprehensive child welfare system with strength-based philosophy.

IA DHS has a current work flow process based on decision points throughout the continuum. Most families go through a similar process. Centralized intake system was instituted two years ago; dedicated supervisors and staff perform intake function only.

The 20-day holistic family assessment started in 1997. Assessment domains include child well-being; parental capability; family safety; family interactions; home environment. Two questions require answers: Did the abuse occur (yes/no)? and What is the ongoing risk to the child (low/moderate/high)?

Community Care

Work Group members requested and received additional information on Community Care Services so the group could have a better understanding about the integration of CCS with the Family Assessment Response pathway. Additional information will be provided at the May meeting on statewide data on the community care program.

Interface between DR Framework and IA Child Protection System

Differential response is a shift in philosophy, organizational culture and practice shift but not a particular model. DR System is one of several transformative strategies in child welfare. It is a departure from incident-based, retrospective, paternalistic system to an ecological, prospective, partnership framework that is responsive to families' needs. It was noted that that

while Iowa has many of policies in place that are consistent with DR, there are identified gaps between these policies and the practice that occurs in the field.

A depiction of differential response integrated into Iowa's Child Protection System was provided on Slide 24 (attached PPT) compared to current system illustrated on Slide 5 and the Case Disposition Decision Tree (Slide 25) identified prospective FAR families compared to current operations (Slide 11). For the May meeting, the facilitator will re-draw the organizational chart to depict the flow – with inclusion of a FAR pathway - for the group's review and response.

Legislative Analyses

A chart detailing a snapshot of States' Differential Response legislative provisions was provided to the Work Group in a handout and referenced in discussion. Some states developed all encompassing legislation – all aspects are in a single statute and little is put in rule (e.g., Minnesota & Tennessee). Briefer state legislation is more prevalent (covering key elements listed below), with selected issues detailed in provisions in other state statutes and in the use of state rule and/or code.

Most common statutory elements include:

- Creation of Two-Track System to Respond to Screened In Reports of Alleged Maltreatment
- Clear definition of New Pathway that highlights absence of formal investigation and finding
- Criteria/types of cases that will continue to receive traditional response
- Ability to switch 'assignment' of family from FAR to traditional if warranted
- Authorization for a phased in implementation...with evaluation...and timeline for state wide implementation

Work Group Members' Connections – Report Out on Key Stakeholders and Entities

Work Group members were requested to provide lists as to whom they know and can communicate information on differential response. Selected members provided Caren with their lists. Talking points and messages will be drafted and subsequently reviewed and approved by the Work Group Members. This will allow the Work Group to engage people who are not members of the group.

Homework Assignment: Work Group members are to respond in writing to the following question: "From your knowledge and experience, what are categories/elements that MUST receive the traditional response/assessment plus?"

Next Meeting: May 9, 2012

Adjourn: 4:15pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Caren Kaplan, MSW