

Washington State Department of

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2024 -7:00pm-8:30pm

Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols and Introductions

Executive Committee Chair, Janel Waterman, and Community Engagement Manager Emily Morgan welcomed attendees and initiated introductions.

Relative Search Unit and Process

Relative Search Supervisor, Kelly Lutes, and Provider Supports Administrator Heidi Walker provided a brief overview on the Relative Search Unit. The presentation included federal and state requirements, definition of 'relative', and how the process plays out within DCYF.

Relative Search Process Presentation

	• I received this form and completed it but didn't hear back. Do this happen (a
Discussion	no follow up)?
	 We are definitely working on better response timing and we do receive them all. We share the results with social workers (and supervisor and area administrator) as well. Social workers are overloaded, and response timing is slower, and we're hoping by including a larger group will elicit a response. All this information is modulated in case notes for case purpose and there's always a record of it. And there's a variety of reasons why people don't respond, and our mail does get returned. For initial relative search family members may wait for other family members to answer first, sometimes relatives will respond at a second relative search inquiry. We can get increased responses in subsequent searches. I was contacted for relative search for my brother's son, and I reached out
	but I was never contacted again.
	 Were you stuck at the social worker level?
	 Yes, I tried to bring his brother to let him see him and it
	never happened. It's really sad, I want to know how to help
	the social worker in this process.
	 Sometimes contacting the constituent relations, we have an obligation to reconnect these families. I'm
	have an obligation to reconnect these families. I'm
	not saying it's an intentional reason from the social
	worker.
	 In another situation with a social worker, I
	was helped with a blood relative child. It's frustrating.



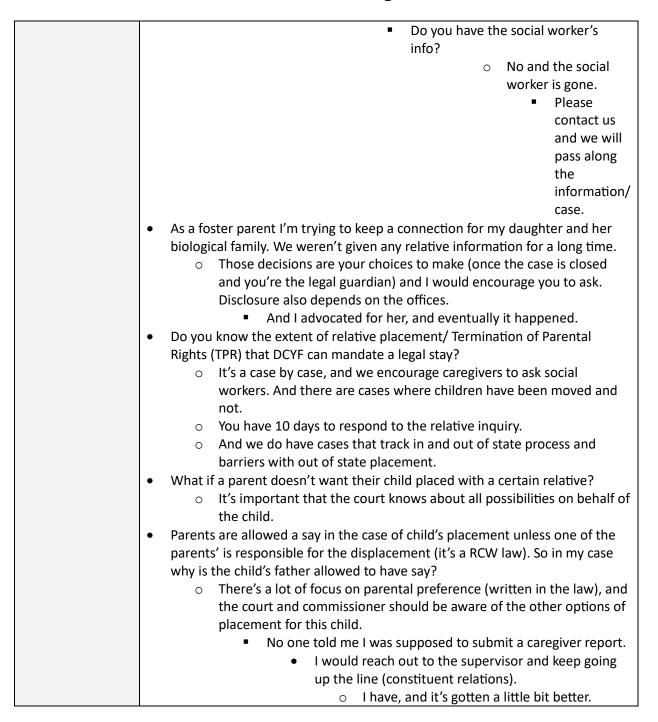
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	 Thank you for being such an
	advocate for this child.
	Does DCYF honor wills and testaments when there is a DV/CPS protection
	order for a child placement (for example if something happens to me, like death)? I can't for sure what would happen, it would depend on the will, the
	court, and relatives.
	Can you clarify the timeline with relative search team?
	 The department is supposed to make contact within the first 30 days for a child in out of home care, and paternal search is within 5 days and then annually.
	 In my case, this child was placed for 5 years, and we didn't know about her.
	 We had a child placement for one year, and she went back to
	her aunt in Arkansas. Then we received a letter from DCYF asking whereabouts of the child.
	 Unfortunately, this does come up, and our unit was developed 7 years ago and there are placements that aren't put in timely. Also, a paternal request could have been put in or a court process. If a child is born out of state and we don't have that birth certificate that can cause another delay (a lot of factors).
	 Social workers can place with an alleged father's family, we can move forward with the legal relative search until paternity has been proven. Are adoptive families included in the relative search?
	 Yes, we would contact all the caregivers of children so the siblings can stay in contact.
Follow up	Please reach out to Kelly Lutes <u>kelly.lutes@dcyf.wa.gov</u> or Heidi Walker <u>heidi.walker@dcyf.wa.gov</u> for any follow up questions.

Closing Remarks/Adjourn

Next	Community Engagement Framework listening sessions.
Steps/Follow Up	<u>Reflection survey</u>
	 Next meeting July 17, 7:00pm-8:30pm