

# Nebraska Children's Commission Meeting

August 8, 2023  
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Lincoln Community Foundation  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
215 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln, NE 68508

## 1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Melissa Nance welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:21 AM She asked attendees to introduce themselves. Roll call was taken by Adam Anderson through introductions.

## 2. Introductions and Roll Call

### *Commission Members Present (8)*

Jarren Breeling (10:27)	Sara Hoyle	Lana Temple-Plotz
Kathy Dinkel	Melissa Nance	Susan Thomas
Richard Hasty	Felicia Nelsen	

### *Commission Members Absent (6)*

A'Jamal Byndon	Misty Flowers	Terri Knutson
Vernon Davis	Ron Giesselmann	LaShawn Young

### *Commission Ex-Officio Members Present (4)*

Proxy for Senator Carol Blood, Alex Mayhew	Proxy for Jennifer Carter, Noah Karmann	Monika Gross Judge Amy Schuchman
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### *Commission Ex-Officio Members Absent (5)*

Senator Beau Ballard	Senator Myron Dorn	Deb VanDyke-Ries
Jeanne Brandner	LaDonna Jones-Dunlap	

**Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.**

### *Guests in Attendance (7)*

Amanda Adams.....	Nebraska Children's Commission
Adam Anderson.....	Nebraska Children's Commission
KeAyra Braithwait.....	Nebraska Children's Commission
Noah Karmann.....	Office of the Inspector General of Child Welfare
Alex Mayhew.....	Office of Senator Blood
Alger Studstill.....	Nebraska DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services
Ivy Svoboda.....	Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers

#### *a. Notice of Publication*

Recorder for the meeting, Adam Anderson, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar and Nebraska Children's Commission websites in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The publication would be kept as a permanent attachment with the meeting minutes.

#### *b. Announcement of the placement of Open Meetings Act information*

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection and was located at the sign-in table and on the Children's Commission Website.

### 3. Approval of the Agenda

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It was moved by Richard Hasty and seconded by Kathy Dinkel to approve the agenda with changes to the order of presenters. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (8):**

Jarren Breeling	Sara Hoyle	Lana Temple-Plotz
Kathy Dinkel	Melissa Nance	Susan Thomas
Richard Hasty	Felicia Nelsen	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

A'Jamal Byndon	Misty Flowers	Terri Knutson
Vernon Davis	Ron Giesselmann	LaShawn Young

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Note that the order of items in the minutes will not be reflective of the original agenda.*

### 4. Approval of the Consent Agenda

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- a. [May 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes](#)
- b. [Member Nomination Report](#)

It was moved by Lana Temple-Plotz and seconded by Susan Thomas to approve the Consent Agenda items. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (7):**

Jarren Breeling	Melissa Nance	Susan Thomas
Richard Hasty	Felicia Nelsen	
Sara Hoyle	Lana Temple-Plotz	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (1):**

Kathy Dinkel

**ABSENT (6):**

A'Jamal Byndon	Misty Flowers	Terri Knutson
Vernon Davis	Ron Giesselmann	LaShawn Young

**MOTION CARRIED**

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## 5. Reimagine Wellbeing/LB 1173

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John Stephen from the Stephen Group joined the meeting via Webex and shared the status of the LB1173 Workgroup. He noted a recent meeting to discuss the financial framework. Stephen stated that the Stephen Group is having a discussion with the new director of the Department of Education regarding collaboration with the workgroup. He stated that all the stakeholders have allowed a lot of input into the process. Stephen noted that a great focus will be on behavioral health and that the managed care organizations are not currently leveraging the services available. He continued that the state could take a broad stance on community available services to leverage federal IV-E dollars, similar to the state of Indiana. Stephen shared that tribal nations are very involved in the work and offered to submit a report as part of the Stephen Group's report.

Stephen noted concern with the Alternative Response going further than initially planned. He asked about the Alternative Response recommendations contained in the NCC annual report. Amanda Adams responded that the recommendations are not finalized but DHHS is collaborating in the recommendations process.

Stephen shared that [info@stephengroupinc.com](mailto:info@stephengroupinc.com) is the place to send feedback.

Stephen also discussed the SED waiver through Medicaid.

Kathy Dinkel discussed caseload standards. John Cooper shared that the group is looking at the Child Welfare League of America standards that are yet to be released. He also noted that the group will also be looking at other states for their standards.

Lana Temple-Plotz discussed post-report implementation. Stephen noted that there are recommendations regarding implementation, but there is no way of knowing whether implementation will be successful. He noted that there should be an oversight group for implementation. Temple-Plotz suggested that it be a function of the Children's Commission. Stephen noted positive discussions with the Governor regarding the outlook of the Child Welfare System.

Members discussed the work of the Stephen Group and the 1173 Workgroup. Members also discussed how this work is different from similar work in the past. Lana Temple-Plotz noted the importance of the Commission reminding stakeholders of the work that has been done as they are elected or come into new positions as administrations change.

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## 6. Commission Review

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Policy Analyst Amanda Adams shared the [New Member Orientation](#) and reviewed any changes that have been made.

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## 7. Executive Committee Update

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Vice Chair Melissa Nance noted that later on in the agenda the Commission will be looking at and voting on the annual reports.

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## 8. Legislative Update

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Amanda Adams shared that she is tracking LR241 from Senator Wishart regarding current provider rates. Adams reached out to the Senator regarding involving the FCRR in the discussion.

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## 9. Strategic Priorities Update

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Amanda Adams discussed the strategic priorities for the Commission and noted that most are progressing as expected. She shared that there is a potential Family Engagement workgroup on the SFA Committee regarding family involvement and reducing isolation in youth and families. Members discussed the potential work of the workgroup. Adams discussed that the work stems from how to increase support of kinship and relative foster parents.

Members discussed the various successes of the Commission and the differences between the many Commissions regarding the child welfare system.

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## 10. DHHS Update

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Alger Studstill shared that the interim DHHS CEO is Bo Botelho and the interim CFS Director is Tony Green. Studstill noted that the search for the new CFS Director will not commence until the new CEO is found.

Studstill shared that there has been work on some special projects that arose out of discussion during the 1173 Committee. He noted that DHHS had the ability to focus on some of the priorities ahead of the recommendations due to DHHS's ability to move forward outside of the 1173 workgroup, such as the focus on family engagement and caseload standards.

Studstill discussed some additional areas of improvement that CFS has completed. He noted that certain data reports from NFOCUS are now pulled in excel as opposed to pdfs to aid in quick data access and review. He noted that DHHS has also looked at intakes under 5 years-old from medical professionals. DHHS has determined the policy to screen intakes in has only resulted in .01% substantiated cases. Through a pilot program, he shared that this policy is being changed to allow for a family engagement worker to reach out to the family for informational purposes only and not a full intake. Studstill also shared information regarding a proposed "warmline" that would allow for family engagement specialists to reach out to the family for education purposes.

Studstill addressed questions regarding staff turnover and training. He noted that there are lead workers that function as mentors as well as to provide for shadowing opportunities. He stated that these workers have a modified specialized caseload.

### **11. Probation Update**

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Sara Quiroz from the Administrative Office of Probation noted that they will have updates at future Commission meetings as new leadership is transitioning in.

### **12. Commission Membership & Vacancies**

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Adam Anderson shared updates regarding membership. He noted that Rachel Folds has left the Commission. He also shared that he has reached out to inactive members to determine their participation moving forward in the interim.

Amanda Adams thanked KeAyra Braithwait for her work as an intern taking minutes, contacting members for reappointment, and cleaning up database lists. Braithwait briefly shared some of the highlights of her internship.

### **13. Nebraska Children's Commission Annual Report Approval**

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Amanda Adams shared the proposed grammatical and clarification changes to the Children's Commission report prior to approval. She noted that this year the reports were redesigned and now are more attention grabbing. She reviewed the highlights from the report. Members suggested changes during discussion.

**It was moved by Lana Temple-Plotz and seconded by Melissa Nance to approve the Nebraska Children's Commission Annual Report with changes as discussed.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

#### **FOR (8):**

Jarren Breeling	Sara Hoyle	Lana Temple-Plotz
Kathy Dinkel	Melissa Nance	Susan Thomas
Richard Hasty	Felicia Nelsen	

#### **AGAINST (0):**

#### **ABSTAIN (0):**

#### **ABSENT (6):**

A'Jamal Byndon	Misty Flowers	Terri Knutson
Vernon Davis	Ron Giesselmann	LaShawn Young

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

**a. Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee Annual Report**

Amanda Adams shared a brief overview of the B2i Report. There was no discussion.

**It was moved by Kathy Dinkel and seconded by Sara Hoyle to approve the B2i Advisory Committee Annual Report.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (8):**

Jarren Breeling	Sara Hoyle	Lana Temple-Plotz
Kathy Dinkel	Melissa Nance	Susan Thomas
Richard Hasty	Felicia Nelsen	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

A'Jamal Byndon	Misty Flowers	Terri Knutson
Vernon Davis	Ron Giesselmann	LaShawn Young

**MOTION CARRIED**

**b. Juvenile Services Committee:**

Amanda Adams shared a brief overview of the JSC annual report and noted the rationale for the inclusion of the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice section of the report. She noted the hard work that has been done by Julie Smith and the Access to Services Workgroup.

**It was moved by Sara Hoyle and seconded by Melissa Nance to approve the Juvenile Services Committee and Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice Joint Annual Report.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (8):**

Jarren Breeling	Sara Hoyle	Lana Temple-Plotz
Kathy Dinkel	Melissa Nance	Susan Thomas
Richard Hasty	Felicia Nelsen	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

A'Jamal Byndon	Misty Flowers	Terri Knutson
Vernon Davis	Ron Giesselmann	LaShawn Young

**MOTION CARRIED**

**c. Strengthening Families Act Committee:**

Amanda Adams noted changes in the Normalcy Subcommittee section of the SFA report and gave a brief overview of that work. There was no discussion.

It was moved by Felicia Nelsen and seconded by Susan Thomas to approve the Strengthening Families Act Committee Annual Report. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (8):**

Jarren Breeling  
Kathy Dinkel  
Richard Hasty

Sara Hoyle  
Melissa Nance  
Felicia Nelsen

Lana Temple-Plotz  
Susan Thomas

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

A'Jamal Byndon  
Vernon Davis

Misty Flowers  
Ron Giesselmann

Terri Knutson  
LaShawn Young

**MOTION CARRIED**

**14. Committee Updates**

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**a. Alternative Response Committee**

AR Co-Chair Monika Gross shared updates from the most recent meeting of the AR Committee. She noted that the Committee had worked to develop strategic priorities last year, and this year had worked to develop recommendations based on those priorities. She shared a brief overview of the workgroups of the AR Committee and noted that a majority of the recommendations are based around data and oversight.

Adams shared thoughts regarding a special report to the Legislature and DHHS regarding the work that has been done, as there is no requirement for AR to send an annual report or to report out their findings. She noted the process for approval of the report.

**b. Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee**

B2i Co-Chair Richard Hasty shared an update from the most recent B2i meeting. He noted fruitful discussions on a variety of topics, recommendations, and priorities as discussed in the annual report. He shared highlights from the workgroup sections of the annual report and noted the recent work of the Sustainability Workgroup. He added that the Committee will be looking at immigration status recommendations and that Central Plains for Services will be looking at increasing Committee engagement by inviting youth to attend with their worker.

**c. Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee**

FCRRC Co-Chair Felicia Nelsen shared the FCRRC report is due every four years and will be due in 2024. She noted that the Committee is in a holding pattern until there is movement on the Therapeutic Family Care programs for foster children. She added that there has been discussion at the committee level to make the reports do every year instead of every four years.

**d. Juvenile Services Committee**

Amanda Adams shared an update from the most recent Juvenile Services Committee meeting. She noted that the committee is assisting as needed with the NCJJ's goal of returning to Title II compliance period. She continued by adding that the work group remains focused on the YRTC system and hopes to resume work at the workgroup level. She shared the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup is attempting to pull together all the different R/ED groups across the state for a discussion.

**e. Strengthening Families Act Committee**

Amanda Adams shared that the SFA Committee will be evaluating the subcommittee work of the Trafficking and APPLA Subcommittees to determine next steps and reinvigorate the work of the larger SFA Committee.

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**15. Retreat**

Vice Chair Nance shared and update regarding the Commission retreat which is planned to occur on November 14, 2023, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, at the Carol Joy Holling Center, 27416 Ranch Road, Ashland, NE 68003. She noted that the Commission has asked all the Chairs of the Committees to attend. She added that Erin Aliano to facilitate the meeting.

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**16. Public Comment**

Vice Chair Nance opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

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**17. New Business**

There was none.

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**18. Upcoming Meeting Planning**

- a. November 14, 2023, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, at the Carol Joy Holling Center, 27416 Ranch Road, Ashland, NE 68003

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**19. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:57 PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam Anderson

DRAFT