

Strengthening Families Act Committee Meeting

April 11, 2019

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

CEDARS Northbridge, 1533 N 27th St, Lincoln, NE 68503

1. Call to Order

Co-Chairs of the Strengthening Families Act (SFA) Committee of the Nebraska Children’s Commission (Commission), Vernon Davis and Sarah Helvey, noted that a quorum of voting members was not present. Discussion could occur on the agenda items, but action on any items would be postponed until a time when quorum could be met.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (10):

Deanna Brakhage	Stephanie Gardella (1:23)	Terri Knutson
Linda Cox*	Ron Giesselmann	Amara Madsen
Vernon Davis	Brandy Gustoff	
Patricia Frost	Sarah Helvey	

Committee Members absent (10):

Payne Ackerman	Heather Colton	Deb Shuck
Simone Armstead	Rebecca Daugherty	Lisa Story
Ashley Brown	Sara Riffel	
Nathan Collier	Nicole Seymour	

Ex Officio and Resource Members absent (2):

Bailey Perry	Deb VanDyke-Ries
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A quorum was not established.

*Let it be noted for the record that the following Linda Cox was designated as temporary voting proxy by Kim Hawekotte.

Guests in Attendance (8):

Amanda Felton.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Chris Jones.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Tom McBride.....	Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association
Amanda McGill Johnson.....	Nebraska Children’s Home Society
Karen Moran.....	DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services
Felicia Nelsen.....	Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
Julie Smith.....	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Cristen White.....	PromiseShip

a. Notice of Publication

Recorder, Amanda Felton, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meetings and Nebraska Children’s Commission websites in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

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 on the sign in table to the side of the meeting room.

3. Approval of Agenda

Co-Chairs of the group indicated that discussion on the agenda items would occur in the order listed.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Approval of the January 10, 2019 minutes was postponed until a time that a quorum could be reached.

5. Co-Chair Report

The Co-Chairs emphasized the need to communicate meeting attendance to Commission staff in advance of the meeting to ensure that a quorum could be met. They also reminded members of the potential Commission and Committee sunset of June 30, 2019 and indicated that information would go out to members as the bill progressed.

6. Department of Health and Human Services Update

Deanna Brakhage, Program Specialist with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), provided an update. She highlighted a policy in progress that would focus on services for pregnant and parenting youth in care.

7. Probation Update

Julie Smith, Juvenile Justice Program Specialist, provided a quick update on the work of the Probation Juvenile Services division. She noted that emergency Professional Foster Care was nearly ready to be offered as a placement option. Other items discussed included the closure of the youth art competition for system involved youth and the efforts to share [information on the Normalcy Survey](#) with probation youth.

8. Subcommittee Updates

a. Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) Subcommittee

An update on the work of the APPLA Subcommittee was given by the group's Co-Chair, Cristen White. The most recent version of the [SFA Advisor video](#) was shared with the group. The members loved the video and had limited feedback which included:

- For the reference of advisors helping provide legal assistance, either remove or shift language to highlight that they could help you locate appropriate persons to provide legal advice
- Emphasize the qualities an advisor should have such as trust, honesty, consistency, commitment, and dependability
- See if there is a way to either shorten the video or split it into multiple short videos

b. Court Implementation Subcommittee Update

Commission Policy Analyst, Chris Jones, gave a summary of what the Court Implementation Workgroup had been working on. She directed members to the updated [Caregiver Information Court Form](#) and the [Older Youth Court Questionnaire](#). The group discussed ways to ensure all relevant parties were aware of the updated forms. The Children's Summit was suggested as an avenue to spread the word. Members also discussed parties who should be designated as the person to ensure receipt of the forms by youth and caregivers. For youth, it was agreed that the GAL would be the most appropriate and that the caregiver form should be distributed at the same time as the notice of hearing.

c. Normalcy Subcommittee

Co-chairs, Tom McBride and Felicia Nelsen, were invited to provide an update on the work of the Normalcy Subcommittee. They informed the Committee that the normalcy survey was live and encouraged members to share [information](#) with any current or former youth. They also expressed disappointment that the [letter](#) the group had drafted for congregate care facilities submitting normalcy plans and report would not be approved in time for this submission period.

d. Trafficking Subcommittee

Chris Jones noted that the group was looking at creating a resource guide and were closely monitoring pending legislation.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Public Comment

Co-Chair Helvey invited any public forward who wished to make comment. No comment was offered.

10. Next Steps

Members were directed to the proposed meeting dates on the agenda. The group discussed the need for an additional meeting prior to the July 11th date. The group refrained from setting a meeting with the thought that the annual report could be approved at the July meeting. Meeting times consisted of the following dates from 1:00 – 3:00 pm:

- July 11, 2019
- October 10, 2019

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Felton