

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FOSTER CARE OVERSIGHT  
ISSUES PRESENTED AND RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSED**

<b>Issues Presented by Conferees</b>	<b>Conferee/Entity Represented</b>	<b>Conferee Recommendations</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>
The foster care system needs independent oversight.	Mike Fonkert, Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice	Kansas Appleseed's top priority is the establishment of an Office of the Child Advocate.	8/25/2020
The COVID-19 pandemic causes anxiety and stress among Kansas families.	Rachel Marsh, Children's Alliance of Kansas	Increase access to broadband, technology, and mental health and substance abuse treatment options.	8/25/2020
Significant opportunity exists for expanded and enhanced kinship navigator programs to find the family support for youth before foster care.	Rachel Marsh, Children's Alliance of Kansas	Invest in evidence-based prevention services for children, parents, and caregivers through the Family First Prevention Services Act, including mental health and substance use treatment, juvenile justice behavioral interventions, and parent concrete support needs.	8/25/2020
Early intervention depends on robust child welfare services, communication, collaboration, and education.	Rachel Marsh, Children's Alliance of Kansas	Address the behavioral health needs of high-risk youth in and out of foster care through enhancing the continuum of available services, including continuing to address the needs of youth on the PRTF waitlist.	8/25/2020
The state needs interagency collaboration to allow for information exchange before foster care referrals are made, such as among child welfare and mental health, juvenile justice, and education.	Rachel Marsh, Children's Alliance of Kansas	Improve safety, monitoring, coordination, and efficiency through investment in technology.	8/25/2020
Missouri created a health information specialist unit that improved access to medical records.	Sonder Crane, MD, and Pamela Shaw, MD, Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics	Create a Health Information Specialist Unit within the Department for Children and Families (DCF) that would have staff trained in reading medical records and able to coordinate health care for children in the foster care system.	8/26/2020
All Kansas jurisdictions need Court Appointed Special Advocates.	Vanessa Dudley-Miller, CASA Association and Kansas CASA Program	Consider the 2019 Child Welfare System Task Force recommendation that the Legislature fund Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) to ensure the availability of CASA volunteers in all jurisdictions, without disrupting the current funding the CASA program receives from the State of Kansas.	8/26/2020
All families, regardless of socioeconomic concerns, should have the same opportunity to have KIN-Tech options available to them.	Marilyn Harp, Kansas Legal Services (KLS)	Re-enact a previous program, Grandparents as Caregivers, as it was first enacted, in order to provide funding at a level higher than that of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families to grandparents caring for their grandchildren. The program as first enacted did not require involvement in the foster care system.	8/26/2020
The foster system is broken, ill-equipped, and underfunded.	Gordon Hibbard, private citizen	Remove incentives for private agencies to cloud decisions on what is best for the foster child; appoint an independent ombudsman for foster children and families to report violations; improve psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) frameworks for healing; and promote and elevate the professional track for caseworkers.	9/22/2020

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Foster parents are burned out but know a lot about the system. Trauma-Informed Partnering for Safety and Permanence-Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (TIPS-MAPP) training is out of-date.	Abbey Dohm, private citizen	Give foster parents a voice and update TIPS-MAPP training.	9/22/2020
Adoption timelines are too long	Abbey Dohm, private citizen	Improve adoption timelines	9/22/2020
There is no central data or information sharing system across the Office of Judicial Administration, DCF, and law enforcement.	Tanya Keys, DCF		9/22/2020
It is important to identify earlier intervention needs and community health services for crossover youth.	Tanya Keys, DCF		9/22/2020
Cooling beds have worked for other jurisdictions, like San Diego.	Shay Bilchik, Georgetown University		9/22/2020
Delays in foster care mental health treatments are costly, and funding is not sufficient.	Andrew Brown, Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS)		9/22/2020
The connection between no call/no show missed appointments and placement instability is one of the primary communications barriers between mental health providers and foster care providers.	Andrew Brown, KDADS		9/22/2020
There is a failure to transfer school records when foster youth changes schools.	Dale Dennis, Kansas State Department of Education		9/22/2020
Foster care youth aging out of the system benefit from services and programs that provide a smooth transition to independent living.	Michelle Reichert, Independent Living Program Manager, DCF	Possible legislative initiatives for additional programs include assisting youth with obtaining driver's licenses and individual development accounts through the Department of Commerce.	9/23/2020
Poverty is often confused for neglect, leading to unnecessary foster care placement.	David Sanders, Casey Family Programs		9/23/2020
Early intervention in child safety is vital for preventing entry into foster care, but child welfare agents and law enforcement officials must communicate. A call to the child abuse hotline is the best indicator of a future fatality, regardless of the finding.	David Sanders, Casey Family Programs	Institute real-time information-sharing among child welfare, law enforcement, and other service providers. Develop targeted responses for infants and other children at high risk. Specifically, handle screened-out hotline calls differently for our most vulnerable populations.	9/23/2020
Congregate care facilities are emotionally trying for foster youth.	Stormy Lukasavage, Kansas Youth Advisory Council	Improve congregate care staff training.	9/23/2020
Hair follicle drug tests are biased against African Americans.	Nina Shaw-Woody, Kansas Family Advisory Network	Reconsider this testing method.	9/23/2020
Social workers experience extreme stress and secondhand trauma, and case loads are overwhelming. Restrictions on where missing youth can be housed lead to more missing youth and fewer stable placements.	Amy Otey, Saint Francis Ministries	Supply more funded positions to ensure lower caseloads and, in turn, less stress. Fund more specific positions who can be liaisons between the education and foster care systems. Review SB 367 and how it affects missing youth and their safety.	9/23/2020
Guardians <i>ad litem</i> have overwhelming caseloads.	Kerrie Lonard, KLS	Establish a system that ensures reasonable caseloads with reasonable compensation, staff and resource support, and incentive and training opportunities for guardians <i>ad litem</i> to become certified child welfare specialists.	9/23/2020

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Time spent in foster care leads to, on average, harmful life outcomes, including chronic disease, early mortality, and increased disease span.	Kevin Campbell, Center for Family Finding and Youth Connectedness	Implement a Kin First system, with investments in finding, partnering with, and supporting parents and relatives as the primary care arrangements; build a plan to significantly reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of expensive and harmful institutional placements of children; and bring the state system to stand shoulder to shoulder with the State Child Protection system and courts.	9/23/2020
Kansas is losing social work college graduates to other states.	Becky Fast, Kansas Chapter - National Association of Social Workers		9/23/2020
Discussing treatment strategies in front of patients sometimes triggers behaviors. The ability to develop treatment without the patient present would assist in treating youth.	Kyle Kessler, Association of Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) of Kansas	Allow therapy to be billed without the patient present (Medicaid Code 90846 would allow this).	9/23/2020
Telemedicine has been a "gamechanger" for behavioral health treatment during the pandemic. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services allowed more flexibility in treating patients.	Kyle Kessler, Association of CMHCs of Kansas	Continue to allow indefinitely telemedicine parity for treatment by telephone and televideo.	9/23/2020
The 2020 Legislature had increased Medicaid reimbursement rates by two percent before the Governor froze the increase as part of the allotments due to economic stability concerns related to the pandemic.	Kyle Kessler, Association of CMHCs of Kansas	Increase the Medicaid reimbursement rate.	9/23/2020
More than half of those who present for treatment at CMHCs have no insurance. Expansion of Medicaid will provide coverage for those who have a mental illness or mental health issues. If a person with a mental health need does not have insurance, they will be less likely to seek care.	Kyle Kessler, Association of CMHCs of Kansas	Expand Medicaid.	9/23/2020
There is a dire shortage of child welfare, mental health, and addiction professionals in Kansas.	Rachel Marsh, Children's Alliance of Kansas	Increase worker salaries through nonprofit provider and Medicaid rates; offer financial incentives such as loan forgiveness, paid practicums and rural opportunity zones (ROZ) programs; establish paths to human services careers starting in middle school or high school; collaborate with Kansas technical colleges and universities to strengthen child welfare career path training; and design a long-term plan for investment in the child welfare workforce.	9/23/2020
Kansas experiences workforce shortages due to emotional trauma, burnout, and non-competitive compensation compared to that of for-profit companies.	Jeannette Owens, DCCCA	Invest in the child welfare system workforce by increasing funding for recruitment, retention, and support to effectively attract and retain high-quality staff.	9/23/2020
Kansas child welfare contracts are rebid every four years. Child welfare professionals want and need job stability. Staff frequently have to change employers in order to continue to hold a position in the same area of the state.	Linda Bass, KVC Kansas	Extend case management grants to eight years or more and create a more seamless experience for child welfare professionals who work for the case management providers.	9/23/2020

	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>
8/25/2020	Develop a policy regarding Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up training.
8/26/2020	After a court hearing involving the custody of a child, require the biological parents be provided written documentation outlining what the court requires of the parents to regain custody.
8/26/2020	Provide additional mental health services for children in foster care.
8/26/2020	Extend time restrictions on benefits, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and expand Medicaid to provide a safety net for children.
9/22/2020	Reconsider rules on whether grandparents are allowed to visit their own biological children post custody.
9/23/2020	Provide the Judicial Branch with additional education to gain knowledge of the impact of the child welfare system on children and families.
9/23/2020	Determine the use of psychotropic medicines for children in foster care and pursue a reduction in such use.
9/23/2020	Consider whether a single Medicaid managed care organization would affect continuity of care.
9/23/2020	Seek a process for an independent investigation that could determine what went wrong when a child, who has come to the attention of DCF, dies.
9/23/2020	Consider the establishment of an Office of the Child Advocate.
9/23/2020	Determine how Medicaid billing might interact with Family First spending, review possible ways to encourage health care providers to accept patients with Medicaid, and review rates.
9/23/2020	Establish a workforce development task force or work group.
9/23/2020	Strengthen workforce continuity in child welfare contractors by considering eight-year grants instead of the current four-year terms.
9/23/2020	Consider an ROZ program to promote social workers in rural communities.
9/23/2020	Provide follow-up every two to three years to confirm individuals continue to qualify as foster parents.
9/23/2020	Support strengthened use of kinship care, where appropriate, through Kin First or other supports to next of kin providing care for foster care children.
9/23/2020	Consider how to prevent multiple moves for children in foster care.
9/23/2020	Address how to assure immediate access to school records to prevent delays in school placement and other circumstances when a foster care child or youth must transfer to a different school.
9/23/2020	Consider how the adoption process can be streamlined.
9/23/2020	Review the required drug testing for parents whose children are in the foster care system and the testing methods used.
9/23/2020	Keep a focus on the children and youth in foster care who "fall through the cracks," do not graduate, and how their foster care experiences becomes a pipeline to future incarceration.