

Livingston County Human Services Collaborative Body
Workgroup Charge
Approved: November 2005

Workgroup Name: Foster, Adoption, and Kinship Services Workgroup (FAKS)

Lead Agency: Department of Human Services

Chairperson: Mark Perkins, DHS

- Responsibilities:
1. Chair regular meetings
 2. Meet with designated staff
 3. Report activities to the HSCB
 4. Represent workgroup at appropriate meetings

Vice Chairperson: Vacant

- Responsibilities: Fill in for chair in their absence. Serve as chair in next term.

Communications Staff: Cynthia Bowling, Department of Human Services

- Responsibilities:
1. Maintain e-mail list for group
 2. Develop minutes of the meeting and distribute meeting packet

Issue to be Studied and/or Acted Upon: Foster, adoptive, and kinship families provide a critical service to children in the child welfare system. In order to recruit and retain foster, adoptive, and kinship homes in the county, the FAKS workgroup was formed. Recruitment and retention occurs through PRIDE training for potential foster parents and ongoing training and events for existing foster, adoptive, and kinship parents. The FAKS group also holds a county hotline for recruitment requests and activities. Another critical element in retention of foster parents is mentoring. All new foster parents are linked with a more experienced foster parent to serve as their mentor.

In the previous year, additional focus has been on the needs of adoptive families. A new adoptive support group has been formed and additional funding for post adoptive services has been designated through Strong Families Safe Children. The new support group will also be open to kinship caregivers as many of their needs are similar. The FAKS group has also sponsored independent fundraisers to raise money for kids in care for costs not covered through other sources.

Workgroup Goal(s): To provide a network of resources to facilitate family education, family support, recruitment and retention for foster, adoptive and kinship families.

Annual Workgroup Objectives:

1. To increase the number of inquiries to 75.
2. To increase the number of total number licensed family foster homes to 58.
3. To increase the number of licensed family foster homes that will accept adolescents and adolescents with challenging behaviors.
4. To maintain a sufficient percentage of viable family foster homes to offset the turnover resulting from attrition and/or foster parent adoption, through retention and support activities.
5. To provide mentoring support to all licensed foster homes.
6. To increase attendance at foster and adoptive support groups and at sponsored in-service trainings.

7. To increase support to adoptive families through communication on training opportunities and resources available.

Key Data to be Collected/Tracked:

- Number of inquiries to the phone line; including foster care, adoption, foster care and adoption and other
- Number of licensed foster homes by agency and school district
- The number of licensed foster homes that will accept adolescents
- The number of licensed foster homes that will accept adolescents with challenging behaviors
- The number of licensed foster homes that close
- The number of licensed foster homes available for short term respite
- The number of trained mentors
- The number of state ward children waiting for adoption
- The number of trainings held with topic and number attending
- The number of recruited adoptive homes for state ward children
- The number attending foster and adoptive parent support group meetings

Meeting Schedule and Time line for Completion (if applicable): The group meets monthly on the first Thursday of the month from 9:30 am – 11:30 am.

Reporting Mechanism and Frequency: FAKS will report to the HSCB at least quarterly in writing and present to the HSCB when there are action items, specific needs, or major accomplishments achieved. The group will also report at the HSCB annual meeting.

Membership:

- Department of Human Services
- Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Parents
- Juvenile Court
- Judson Center
- Forever Families
- Hope's Closet – Brighton First United Methodist Church
- Community Mental Health
- Lutheran Social Services

Responsibilities of HSCB: Support/approve grant applications as necessary and any other needs/requests by the FAKS workgroup.

Other Relevant Information: The FAKS workgroup was created in 1999 and merged with the foster parent recruitment group in 2003. Recruitment and retention funds through the Department of Human Services and a portion of Strong Families Safe Children funds are designated for FAKS activities. FAKS also serves as the Recruitment, Retention, and Training Strategy Team for the Livingston County Family to Family Initiative.