

Arlington Community Services Board (CSB)

Children and Youth Committee

10/03/2016 – Department of Human Services, 2100 Washington Boulevard, Room A

Committee Present: Asha Patton-Smith, Marguerite Tomasek, Joanne Del Toro,

Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) Staff: Tabitha Kelly, Sharon Lawrence, Jana Lee, Renee Perrier

Called to order: 6:30pm

DHS Child Welfare Presentation:

Overview of child welfare and CPS processes:

Mandated reporters have a duty to report suspected abuse, not prove it. Mandated reporters include teachers/school personnel, physicians/nurses, law enforcement, child care providers, mental health professionals, Christian Science Practitioners, social workers, coaches, etc.

Q: if you think the abuser is an uncle or aunt not a primary caretaker, would they qualify as someone to report.

A: If they were acting as a caregiver then yes.

Overview of types of abuse:

Physical abuse: including hitting, punching, pinching, beating, bizarre discipline, burning or scalding, smothering, please note poisoning could be over medicating, Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

Emotional abuse: consistent failure to provide a child with support, attention and affection, or exposure of a child to domestic violence, bizarre discipline, chronic pattern of negative behaviors such as belittling, humiliation, ridicule

Sexual abuse:

Sexual Exploitation/prostitution, forcing a child to watch sexual conduct, exposure, intercourse and sodomy, sexual abuse via the internet, sexual molestation, incest, child pornography, sexual harassment

Neglect occurs when a caregiver neglects or refuses to provide care necessary for the child's health and well-being. Types of neglect can include:

Inadequate: Shelter, supervision, clothing, personal hygiene, food

Medical neglect: not responding to a child's medical needs

Virginia Law requires mandated reporters make their report immediately upon obtaining information that triggers suspicion that child abuse has occurred and in no case later than 24 hours.

When discussing potential abuse with a child: listen carefully, use the child's own vocabulary, do not investigate do not ask leading questions, do not notify the parents if a report is made.

What to report: Names (siblings), parents/guardians, child care arrangements, ages, school info, emergency contact numbers, address and phone numbers, anything else you know.

Walk Through of Child Welfare Process Map:

CPS validates about 300/3000 calls a year. On average, we remove around 50 kids a year due to abuse and neglect, depending on outcome, they may or may not return home. About 28 kids are returned

home a year, this has been pretty consistent over the last few years. A few years ago, kids were languishing in foster care around 2x the national average. Since then we have gotten our numbers down significantly, by pushing kinship care and preserving family connections. Currently we have 85 kids under the age of 18, and 15 kids ages 18-21. Recent legislation now allows kids to stay in care longer.

Asha: Foster families that I've worked with always have glowing reviews of working with Arlington County and some will only work with Arlington, despite having access to other counties.

CPS Response Levels

R1: respond in 24 hours

R2: respond within 48 hours

R3: within 5 days, example would be: childcare center incident, domestic violence situation where the alleged abuser is incarcerated, this allows more time to respond.

Q: What if someone comes in and gets closed but reoffends?

A: If it happens within 45 days then we get a new report on a current investigation. If it's closed due to low risk, they are given supports they can access and follow back up if they need to.

The Ongoing CPS team works with kids who stay in the home and provide wrap-around services to reduce or remediate the risk. We usually keep cases for 6 months to a year, some are longer, particularly if there is court involvement. Every family has a case manager who works regularly in the home with the family and receives progress reports from service providers (i.e. substance abuse, therapy, domestic violence, etc.) to assess if they are better off. We are currently serving 35 families, totaling 75 kids; 14 families have a protective order.

When working with families assessing for safety is ongoing, so we do have to determine whether kids can safely remain with their families or come into care. We don't like to make that choice, but safety is paramount. We try for kinship first. We ask for kinship resources immediately upon receiving an ongoing case, usually during the Family Partnership Process (FPM), so if we run into a crisis, we are prepared.

Q: what about kin outside of the county?

A: they can be sent to the outside location, or sometimes family comes here. It is possible

Q: what percentage of kids in the system are under kinship care?

A: VA is the lowest in the usage of kinship care, NOVA has joined forces to compel the state to do more around kinship caregivers.

There are Family Partnerships Meeting's before court hearings during which we explore identification of family resources and the plan is presented to the courts. We currently have 59 Foster families in Arlington County. There are 100 kids in care, families can take multiple kids. We try really hard to keep siblings together.

Once in care, can their school placement be maintained?

Yes, there is a law (McKinney Vento Law) that says that all efforts need to be made to maintain children who come into foster care in their schools, with their peers, etc. if they have to move, we try to do a planned move at the end of the semester.

The goal is to have kids exit care as quickly as possible, when you start to get to the 15 month mark, we begin to really hit timeframes mandated by the law. TPR (Termination of Parental Rights) can be done depending on how long the kids have been in care.

Q: Do Foster parents get "first dibs" when their foster child is up for adoption?

A: 60% adopt the kids who are in the home, we always want to make sure that family (of origin) members are consulted first, if not you may get a contested adoption. After relative caregivers, Foster families are next to be consulted, the older you get in care the less likely it is to be adopted. We truly push older child adoption, but statistically older age and your race play a huge factor in hindering your permanency. We also try to put in resource families, places to go for the holidays, etc.

Asha: Providers are trying to keep an eye on the many medications that kids in care are on. There are quarterly reports of what medications kids in care are receiving, to review for trends and there are insurance triggers that are supposed to control for abuse of medications, etc.

Minutes review/approval: Postponed until November meeting

Monthly Stats/Outreach Updates/Upcoming:

New Business: N/A

Old Business: N/A

Announcements:

Next Meeting: November 7, 2016 at 6:30pm

Department of Human Services

2100 Washington Boulevard, Lower Level, Room A