



Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee

The mission of the Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee is to provide oversight for and promote communication between the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Social Services and its related agencies, and the community, with emphasis on providing information and recommendations that make the system more effective and efficient.

MINUTES

June 4, 2025

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Meeting held in-person for Committee Members and public.

Virtual option via Microsoft Teams for public only

I. Call to order and introductions.

Kevin/DSS Support Staff

- Meeting called to order by Committee Vice Chair, Kevin Lisitsin, at 9:01 AM with roll call by DSS Support Staff, Julia Perez.

II. Approve Minutes for May 7, 2025 and June 4, 2025 Agenda.

- Maisie Young (District 2) motioned; Patti Scovill (District 3) seconded to approve the May 2025 Minutes and June 2025 Agenda.

III. Receive Report from DSS CWS Addressing Critical Areas

Dalvin

- Child Welfare Services (CWS) Deputy Director, Dalvin Baker, noted that the staff vacancy rate may increase.
- The data shown on the June 2025 data report was extracted on 5/23/2025. The report reflected an incorrect extraction date in April.

IV. New Business

A. Presentation on Placement Process for Foster Youth, Emergency Response and RFA Training Requirements Elizabeth

- The Committee was provided with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation in advance. Below are key points and additional information pertaining to the presentation.*
- Elizabeth Guerrero is the Placement Division Chief for CWS.
- Emergency Placement is temporary care that provides housing for children that are facing abuse, neglect and/or sudden loss of guardianship. Placement must be arranged within 72 hours or less to ensure child safety.
- Per WIC § 309(a), if an assigned Social Worker is unable to make a safety plan to avoid the removal of youth, then separation occurs. Relative/kin placement is automatically investigated. If there is tribal affiliation, a tribal placement will be considered as well. Additional considerations involved in Emergency Placement include:
 - Assessment guidelines
 - Background, home environment, and safety
 - Preferential considerations (WIC Code § 361.3 / All County Letter (ACL) 17-65)
 - "Family's voice and choice"
 - Education
 - Supports (e.g., educational, medical, special needs, child care)
 - Financial assistance
- If there is no relative/kin/tribal placement available, the assigned Social Worker will submit a request for placement search assistance to the Resource Family Support (RFS) Unit.
- The RFS Unit contacts the County Resource Family Approval (RFA) homes that meet the needs of the youth. When there is a placement match, that information will be provided to the assigned Social Worker and their Supervisor, and they will make the determination on the best placement for the child.
- If an RFA placement is not found, then the RFS Unit will begin searching for a Foster Family Agency (FFA) placement.
- During the placement search process, when necessary, children can be cared for at the CWS building. There are rooms in the CWS building designed for this purpose. Youth cannot stay longer than 23 hours.
- FFAs can sometimes serve as emergency placements.
- Placement workgroups are currently being held to improve practices and implement different approaches.

- The placement option pool that CWS utilizes comes from contracted agencies or community members who have or who want to become resource parents. All placement options go through background checks and additional requirements prior to approval.
- Research demonstrates youth experience better outcomes with relative/kin placement(s), so that is the preferred placement type. Kin placement is also a Federal and Statewide (CDSS) ask.
 - Fresno County has doubled their relative/kin placement in recent years.
- As stated in Written Directives (WD) Section 6-06, potential resource families must complete the pre-approval training requirements:
 - Complete a minimum of 12 hours of training;
 - Begin training no earlier than 60 days prior to submission of application; and
 - Submit application prior to completion of training.
- There are 20 topics on which resource families must complete training.
- Senate Bill (SB) 354 has decreased restrictions on relatives/kin with certain, previous criminal convictions, allowing qualification as a resource parent if the court finds that the placement will not pose a risk to the health or safety of the child.
- RFA staff make visits to approved resource families on a quarterly basis and case management staff make monthly visits. If further visitation is required for individual cases/placements, that will be accommodated.

B. Quarterly CQI Report-out

Frank

- Social Work Supervisor, Frank Montez-Maldonado, presented Quarter 2 data for Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs).
- CFSRs are Federal assessments conducted by the State for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and the Children's Bureau to evaluate how well State Child Welfare agencies are meeting Federal Child Welfare requirements.
- CFSRs focus on ensuring safety, permanency, and well-being for children in the CWS.
- The main goals of CFSRs are: to ensure compliance with federal standards, improve outcomes for children and families, hold states accountable, and promote best practices.
- The CFSR Item Reference Guide contains a detailed reference for all 18 CFSR items, which includes descriptions, references, and examples of strengths and areas needing improvement (ANI).
- CDSS selects random cases for review.
- The number of reviews depends on the size of the county. For Fresno County, there are about 25 reviews produced each quarter.
- There is an emphasis on the quality of the review as opposed to the quantity, so thorough documentation is required.
- The strengths, ANI and recommendations for improvement for all 18 items are detailed on the CFSR Item Reference Guide packet that was provided to the Committee.

C. Discuss and Approve Amended Bylaws

All

- The Committee was provided with a copy of the proposed amended Bylaws along with a copy showing tracked changes that had been made.
- There was a concern regarding attendance at meetings in Article V, Section 4 (b), and the lack of "approved absences" in writing in the Bylaws.
 - Per Deputy Senior County Counsel, Rebekah Eropkin, all Fresno County Boards, Commissions, and Committees must follow the Fresno County Ordinance Code, Chapter 2.68, and although "excused absences" are not included in the Ordinance Code, a Committee member may petition the Board of Supervisors to waive 1 or more of their absences retroactively.
- Assigned DSS support Staff Analyst will assist the Committee by creating the Board Agenda Item necessary to take the proposed Bylaws to the Board of Supervisors for their review/approval of the changes made.
- Karina (District 1) motioned and Korey (District 5) seconded to approve the amended Bylaws. All in favor, none opposed.

V. Subcommittee Update

A. Education

Pamela

- Pam (District 5) will be retiring as Director for the Foster and Homeless Youth Education Services at FCSS and will therefore be resigning as Chair for the Education Subcommittee, though she will remain a regular Committee member.
- Graduation and school stability rates are improving.
- There was a meeting that discussed various foster youth support programs within the districts. There are programs that assist youth with their financial aid application from start to finish and they are also provided with a college dorm kit.

Rosemary Alanis, FCSOC Chair Kevin Lisitsin, FCSOC Vice Chair		
DSS Support Staff: Julia Perez	cwsfcsoc@fresnocountyca.gov	(559) 600-2328

B. Children's Mental Health

Kevin

- Exodus, a crisis stabilization center, presented at the last Children's Mental Health Subcommittee meeting. Exodus provides counseling support services for youth and families facing crisis, such as family break-ups and child suicide.

VI. Announcements

- No meeting in July due to Holiday. Next FCSOC meeting will be held on August 6, 2025.
- Part II of the Placement Presentation, Placement for Youth with Complex Needs, will take place at the August 6th meeting.

VII. Requested Discussion Topics for Upcoming Meeting

- Patti requested information on how many foster youth, ages 3 and 4, are taking advantage of attending early education, and would like to know what barriers they experience that leads to unenrollment/nonattendance. She would also like to know what type of assistance they need to move forward with early childhood school enrollment and attendance.
- Korey requested data on how many foster youth have been placed in a Short Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP) for longer than a year, as well as how many STRTP clinicians are licensed and how many are being supervised while completing their hours.
- Pam (District 5) would like to further discuss a school rule that takes away cell phones from students during school hours.
 - Maisie (District 5) added the following: that by June/July 2026, school districts will have to have a proposal and plan in place for how students will be operating with smart phones for school purposes, but other than that, students will not have their phones during the day. There has been some push-back regarding the new regulation. Madera Unified School District has already implemented the new regulation at their middle schools and has reported positive feedback. Part of the reason for implementing this new regulation was to increase student interaction and there were discussions to host activities during lunch for students.

VIII. Adjourn: Next meeting will be held Wednesday, August 6, 2025 at 9:00am, in-person for Committee members and the public. Virtual option via Microsoft Teams is only for members of the public. Please note: participation in FCSOC meetings requires in-person attendance. Virtual option is view-only. Yahaira motioned; Patti seconded to adjourn. Meeting adjourned by Kevin at 11:05 AM.

Committee Attendance

Supervisor Designated as FCSOC Member: Luis Chavez, District 3 Yahaira Figueroa, Chief of Staff and Proxy to Supervisor Chavez				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karina Lopez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Lisitsin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patti Scovill	<input type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Alanis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Hancock
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maisie Young	Vacant	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Korey Keith
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracy Kashian	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant

*** Marked Boxes Indicate Committee Member Attended**

Attending Staff and Guests

In Person: Cathi Huerta, Kimberli Smith, Dalvin Baker, Rebekah Eropkin, Julia Perez, Hillary Bolger, JaLeesah Otero, Brian Van Anne, Kathleen Hernandez, Ron Alexander, Rebekah Rodriguez

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