

MINUTES
Division of Family Services
Advisory & Advocacy Council Meeting
April 17, 2013

Attendees: Leslie Newman, Mary Lou Edgar, Rosalie Morales, Steve Field, Mary Jo Wolfe, Lisa Jumps, Joseph Smack.

Meeting called to order at 4:05 pm.

Opening Comments – Leslie welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of prior meeting minutes – Approved with one correction. Mary Lou wanted it noted that the future focus should reflect that the community education project is geared to educate residents about adoption and the issues that can arise when children have been badly traumatized.

Community Education in Adoption – Mary Lou Edgar from A Better Chance for Our Children presented on the Interagency Council on Adoption’s efforts to begin a community education program designed to change the way adoption is perceived. The multi-agency committee is working to highlight different types of adoptions and hope to have a series done in the News Journal and weekly papers as well as radio interviews. They hope to recruit for post adoptive and foster parents in the process and increase the public’s knowledge of services available to assist adoptive families and to perhaps grow resources. Mary Lou reported that they are working on building a speakers bureau to reach the community. There are plans to make a video of a trauma-informed speaker at the PBHS conference on May 1st and share that during presentations to the public. They are also looking at utilizing Volunteer Legal Services to assist families when needed. There is also work being done to identify a police officer who could help educate fellow officers about the challenges adopted families sometimes face. Mary Lou is excited by the opportunities.

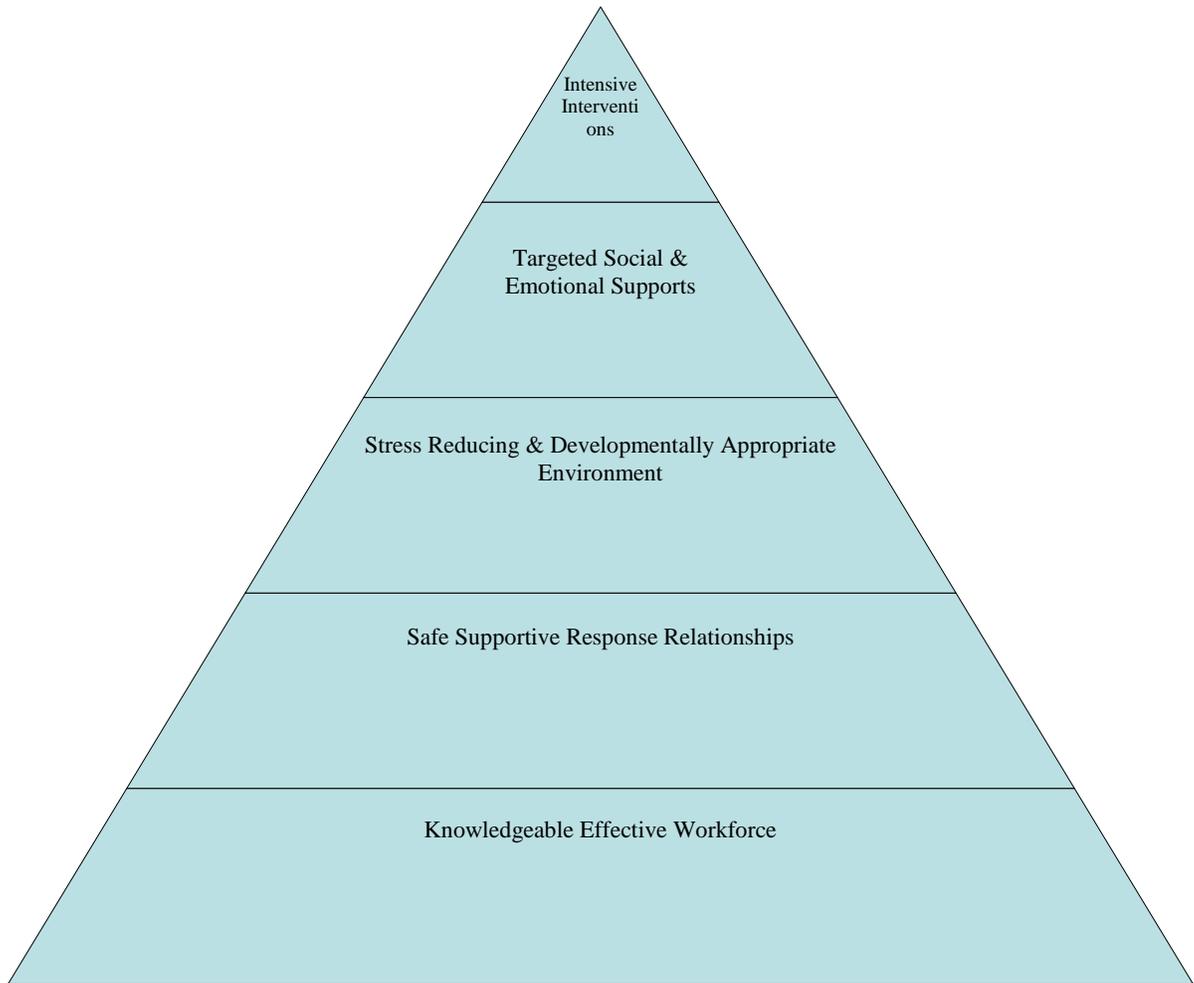
Leslie said that Nebraska and Wisconsin have education curriculum geared for teachers to educate them about how to sensitively work with children of adoption. Leslie will try to procure a copy of Nebraska’s curriculum.

Mary Lou handed out an article from the Columbus Dispatch highlighting the scientific work that shows that children who suffered from extreme neglect have significantly less brain size and function.

This project is a two-pronged effort; telling parents the truth about the kids and to provide the tools to help the kids. Eventually this plan will be brought to the General Assembly for possible funding. This has to be made into something the General Assembly will want to learn about.

Child Wellbeing - Chairperson Leslie Newman spoke of a longitudinal study called the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NASCAW) that has been conducted by the federal Administration for Children and Families designed to study the long-term impacts of child abuse and neglect. Discussion also focused on the need for training professionals and families about trauma informed care which will lead to better outcomes for kids in care. Leslie shared Brian Samuel's (Children's Bureau) hierarchy of child well-being:

1. Focus on child and family outcomes
2. Monitor progress for reduced symptoms and improved child/family functioning
3. Proactive approach to social and emotional needs
4. Developmentally specific approach
5. Promotion of healthy relationships
6. Build capacity to deliver evidence-based practices



Leslie said it is important to train our families about trauma informed care. The real impact is the training and support of families that will allow them to be more effective in working with kids. In November, Leslie and Vicky will be returning to meetings related to child well-being and will share resources. It is hoped that more discretionary grants from the federal government on well-being.

DFS Update – No report

Agency Updates – April 25th is the annual Blue Bow Event at Legislative Hall. The Governor’s proclamation for April as Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month will be read and many members of the Kids Caucus are expected to be in attendance.

Future Focus – Continuation of the Community Education in Adoption presentation by Mary Lou Edgar.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, July 24th, 4pm – 6pm at the DSCYF Administration Bldg. Wilmington. A reminder and further information will follow prior to the meeting date.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph D. Smack
Division of Family Services