



# LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

*Celebrating 26 Years of Advocacy & Achievement*

## COMMISSIONERS

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Rev. Cecil L. Murray  
Sandra Rudnick  
Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW  
Martha Trevino Powell  
Dr. Harriette F. Williams

## APPROVED MINUTES

The Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **February 7, 2011**, in the Johnson Auditorium of the Children's Bureau Magnolia Place Family Center, 1910 Magnolia Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim accounting or transcription of events at this meeting.**

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Dr. La-Doris McClaney
Patricia Curry	Steven M. Olivas, Esq.
Ann Franzen	Sandra Rudnick
Susan F. Friedman	Martha Trevino Powell
Dr. Sunny Kang	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Helen A. Kleinberg	

### COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Genevra Berger	Stacey Savelle
Rev. Cecil L. Murray	Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:10 a.m.

#### II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

#### III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- **February 7, 2011**

##### Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Williams, seconded by Vice Chair Friedman (Commissioners Berger, Murray, Savelle, and Sorkin being absent), the agenda for February 7, 2011, was unanimously approved.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- **January 10, 2011**

**Action Taken:**

On motion of Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner McClaney (Commissioners Berger, Murray, Savelle, and Sorkin being absent), the January 10, 2011 minutes ([copy on file](#)) were unanimously approved with the following amendments at the recommendation of Commissioner Sorkin:

Page 6, Under “Action Taken,” Questions to the Family Preservation Program Staff posed by the Commission, revised to read as follows:

- ~~▪ How is the \$11.5 million reinvestment dollars distributed to SPAs?~~
- ~~▪ Are reinvestment funds distributed by the number of cases, with SPA 6 having the most money?~~
- ~~▪ Is funding determined based on the amount of service providers in each SPA and the dollar amount for each?~~
- ~~▪ How does FR and FM relate to Front/Back End services?~~
- ~~▪ How many cases are court-ordered to have Family Preservation Services?~~
- ~~▪ What is the average length of time to receive Family Preservation Services?~~
- ~~▪ Is the Family Preservation Program accessing Mental Health dollars for counseling services?~~
- ~~▪ In terms of Auxiliary funds, there is a finite amount of funds. Does DCFS and the contracted agencies access faith-based organizations which oftentimes have services and items that they can deliver to families?~~
- ~~▪ Is the Family Preservation Program aware of faith-based organizations?~~

1. How is the 11.5 million reinvestment dollars distributed by SPA?

The response should indicate whether there is an equitable distribution of funds based on caseload size. For example, does SPA 6 receive the greatest allocation? Which service providers are located in each SPA, and what is the dollar amount each receives.

2. How do the FR and FM cases relate to Front End and Back End cases?
3. How many cases are court-ordered for Family Preservation services?
4. What is the average length of time a family receives Family Preservation services?
5. In terms of counseling services, are Mental Health dollars being accessed?
6. There is a finite amount of Auxiliary funds. Does DCFS and contract agencies access faith-based organization to access items being requested or are needed by families?

**V. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Curry reported the following:

- Commissioners may have received or will be receiving an email from staff regarding Assembly Bill 1234 Ethics Training. Online or instructor-led training is available. Please ensure that you complete this mandatory training for all Commission members. Questions regarding training can be directed to Commission Staff.
- Leslie Heimov, Executive Director, Children's Law Center, who regularly attends Commission meetings, informed us due to her involvement with Assembly Bill 12, she will not be attending future Commission meetings for the foreseeable future. However, Ms. Heimov has designated the following Children's Law Center staff: Ivy Carrie, David Estep, Phyllis Stricklan, Brenda Dabney, and Carol Richardson who will be taking turns attending Commission meetings.
- The Commission meetings scheduled for March 2011 will primarily focus on organizing Committee efforts.

**Action Taken:**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, Chair Curry's verbal report was received and filed.

**VI. DCFS DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Dr. Jackie Contreras,  
Chief Deputy Director,  
DCFS**

Dr. Contreras reported the following:

- The nationwide search for a new DCFS Director has yielded fruitful candidates. The Chief Executive Office (CEO) estimates that DCFS will have a new Director within 90 days.
- DCFS received an extension for the Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project (Waiver) which was approved by the State of California's Administration for Children and Families through April 30, 2013 ([copy on file](#)).
- DCFS continues the second sequence initiatives under the Waiver. Evaluations of the initial strategies for the Waiver were conducted, which resulted in the expansion of the Team Decision Making (TDM) specifically to add permanency planning, conferences for the TDM's to achieve permanency for youth in long term foster care. Three permanency units in DCFS regional offices continue to provide assistance to youth in efforts to move youth towards permanency. A second sequence strategy was to improve upfront

assessments to address any issues early on in the process, and link families to appropriate services.

- Recommendations regarding the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) are underway; however, due to the fiscal environment, DCFS has been unable to move forward with recommendations. The expansion of permanency units to all 18 regional offices is one strategy under PIDP.

Another recommendation is to improve caseloads. Across the country, the average number of up-front caseloads ranges from 10-12. The national average number of back-end caseloads is slightly higher at 15; DCFS' caseloads are much higher than the national average. DCFS' up-front caseloads average approximately 18 and 24 on the back-end; therefore, DCFS has been internally reviewing how it can reduce caseloads and maximize resources.

- As result of the Katie A. Settlement, DCFS is enhancing its joint response with the Department of Mental Health (DMH). When DCFS receives a call on a child with prior history with DCFS, they connect with DMH in a joint effort to ensure a complete assessment.
- In anticipation of Assembly Bill 12, DCFS has focused planning the switch over for KinGap children, which will switch over to Federal funding on January 1, 2012.
- On January 18, 2011, DCFS initiated its Out of Home Care Investigation Section. This section investigates allegations of abuse or neglect in out-of-home care.
- DCFS had its fourth office convert over to the Qualitative Service Review (QSR) process. In addition, DCFS will review and analyze if there are disproportionality and disparity within that workgroup. During the QSR process, DCFS struggled with Permanency standards, which were lower than what the Department had set forth.
- The Data Dashboard has been pending for several years but will hopefully roll out in a few months. The Data Dashboard will help keep people informed how DCFS is doing, especially for safety measures.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Dr. Contreras added the following:

- The DCFS reentry rate is currently at 12.4 percent, which is up from 10.7 percent above the national average of 9.8 percent. DCFS is concerned about reentry rates and is reviewing risk assessments before reunifying families and the after care services provided to families after reunification. In addition,

DCFS is also reviewing services offered by other County departments to ensure that they are not duplicating services.

- The DCFS goals for the Interim Director, Ms. Antonia Jimenez, are short term goals for the next 3-6 months while the Department transitions. These goals were specifically designed to address infrastructure and are not program-specific.
- Relative Caregivers will be included in Waiver discussions.
- DCFS has been able to gather initial outcome achievement data for up-front assessments; however, the data is not currently available. DCFS can bring this information to the next Commission meeting scheduled for March 7, 2011.
- DCFS is reviewing the possibility of conducting smaller evaluations of Waiver strategies in order to determine its effectiveness. It is also working with Casey Family Programs, universities, and other organizations on this endeavor.
- A federal grant was awarded to DCFS to achieve permanency for long-term foster care children. Through this grant DCFS will receive approximately \$580,000 in the first year and approximately \$1,000,000 in the next 2-5 years. DCFS intended to use grant funds to build two permanency units; however, they received a State directive to not move forward because costs to build the permanency units would consume the entire grant. DCFS is reviewing its options and may consider utilizing Waiver dollars to build the proposed permanency units.

As requested by the Federal government, DCFS will use the grant to analyze the barriers to permanency for those youth who are staying in long term foster care. DCFS will focus on disproportionality and disparity within the African-American and American-Indian communities.

- The next reinvestment of Waiver dollars has been on hold, due to the transitional period DCFS is currently in, as well as due to the current fiscal environment. DCFS does have current reinvestment dollars available to spend in Fiscal Year 2011-12 and when a new Director is hired, a plan showing reinvestment funds expenditure will be presented to the Commission.
- Although the Permanency units are a priority of DCFS, it will not cut programs and services in order to build the additional units. DCFS will reevaluate strategies to determine where to spend reinvestment dollars from the Waiver.
- Alameda and Los Angeles County, the only two counties in the State participating in the Waiver, were concerned when Governor Brown's

realignment proposal was silent on the Waiver. However, this does not mean that the Governor has taken a position on the Waiver. DCFS will work with Alameda County to ensure that people are aware of the importance of the Waiver.

- DCFS will share its Practice Model draft at the next Commission meeting.

**Action Taken:**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, Dr. Contreras' report was received and filed.

**VII. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS**

- a. Follow Up Presentation by DCFS' Family Preservation Program, as requested at the meeting of January 10, 2011 (Note: This item has been continued to the meeting of March 7, 2011, at the request of DCFS staff.)**

**Marilynn Garrison, DCFS  
Naftali Sampson, DCFS**

**Action Taken:**

On motion of Commissioner McClaney, seconded by Vice Chair Friedman (Commissioners Berger, Murray, Savelle, and Sorkin being absent), this item was continued to the meeting of March 7, 2011.

- b. Magnolia Place Community Initiative (Presentation by a Panel of Partner Organizations)**

**Lila Guirguis, Director  
Magnolia Place Community Initiative**

Ms. Guirguis and the Panel of Partner Organizations reported the following:

- President and CEO Mr. Alex Morales provided the Commission with a background of how the Magnolia Place Community Initiative began.
- Magnolia Place Community Initiative unites Children's Bureau with 70 other nonprofit community organizations in an effort to create sustainable change for families, build neighborhood resiliency and become a national model for other vulnerable communities. Through this partnership, the Magnolia Place Community Initiative serves families well beyond the walls of the Center by transforming the community.
- Lila Guirguis, Director, Magnolia Place Community Initiative, gave a presentation to the Commission ([copy on file](#)).
- Mr. Carlos Pineda, Chief Executive Office, provided the Commission with an update on the Magnolia Place Network ([copy on file](#)-see pages 11-12).

**Action Taken:**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Debra Reid addressed the Commission regarding Agenda Item VI.

**IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There was none.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curry at 12:09 p.m.