

Foster Parent Training Committee Report to the Training Council

March 23, 2006

Background

On March 31, 2005, the Training Council finalized and approved the Foster Parent Training Committee Charge (Exhibit A) which defined the scope, responsibilities, structure and membership of the committee. The committee is co-chaired by the training partnerships and has county, tribal, private agency, foster and adoptive parent, Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, and DCFS representation. The Foster Parent Training Committee reports to the Training Council.

The committee is responsible for both short and long-term goals related to foster parent training statewide. In the short-term, the goals center around the action steps and activities in the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) related to researching the impact of mandating statewide foster parent training and making recommendations about the development and delivery of foster parent training statewide. The long-term goals of the committee include regular review of foster parent training competencies and assessment of ongoing foster parent training needs.

The Foster Parent Training Committee has met seven times since May 2005. The committee has spent time at each meeting clarifying the issues related to foster parent training statewide; has surveyed counties, tribes and private licensing agencies and foster parents across the state to gather a baseline of data; has gathered and looked at research from around the nation; and has provided guidance around what content and goals should be included in the various levels of foster parent training across the State of Wisconsin. The surveys were distributed through foster care coordinator regional meetings by various committee members who attended the meetings to share the survey and discuss the committee's work. Additionally, Gary Laehn, Training Council Chair, sent a letter to all directors explaining the work of the committee.

Survey Results Summary

One of the reasons that the State of Wisconsin was found not to be in substantial conformity in the Training Systemic Factor of the CFSR was because statewide foster parent training is not mandated or provided consistently around the state. While PACE pre-service foster parent training has been accepted as the training model by many around the state, it is not offered in all 72 counties and 11 tribes or by all private licensing agencies.

Through the 25 question Foster Parent Training Committee Foster Care Coordinator Survey that inquired about pre-service and ongoing foster parent training, the committee learned that pre-service group training is prohibitive to some licensing agencies due to a variety of reasons, including the limited number of foster parents a licensing agency may license at any one time or in any year, limited resources, and management decisions. Therefore, the PACE pre-service group training modality has been difficult to implement across the state. Additionally, while many county agencies train PACE pre-service, the committee learned that it is not truly trained around the state as a pre-service training, as pre-service is defined (before first placement). Rather, many agencies training PACE pre-service or their own pre-service require their foster parents to have completed pre-service training between first placement and by the end of the first licensing period, typically two years.

The survey results that follow are summarized by county, tribal and private licensing agency, and further by pre-service and ongoing training.

County-Specific Survey Results

Of the 72 counties in the State of Wisconsin, the survey response rate was 82% (59 of 72 county agencies responded to the survey). The average number of new foster homes licensed on an annual basis outside of Milwaukee County is 8 homes (range of 1-66; Milwaukee licenses 200 homes annually). The average number of currently licensed foster homes outside of Milwaukee County is 40 (range of 4-220; Milwaukee has 1168 licensed homes).

Survey results specific to **pre-service** training include:

- 76% (45 of 59) of the counties responding to the survey mandate pre-service training, averaging 30 hours (range of 8-39 hours), for all new foster homes
- 9% (5 of 59) of the counties responding to the survey offer (but do not mandate) pre-service training, averaging 21 hours (range of 3-39 hours), for all new foster homes
- Of the 85% (50 of 59) of counties that mandate or offer pre-service training for all new foster homes:
 - 30% (15 of 50) require the completion of the pre-service training prior to licensure or first placement
 - 20% (10 of 50) require the completion of the pre-service training ASAP/when offered next
 - 24% (12 of 50) require the completion of pre-service training within one year
 - 14% (7 of 50) require the completion of pre-service training within two years
 - 12% (6 of 50) have no time requirements for the completion of pre-service training
 - On average, the counties outside of Milwaukee County offer two rounds of pre-service training sessions annually (range of 0-15); Milwaukee offers 21 rounds annually.
 - 72% (36 of 50) collaborate with another county or agency in order to conduct and provide pre-service training
 - 84% (42 of 50) utilize the PACE curriculum to provide their pre-service training
- 15% (9 of 59) of the counties responding to the survey do not mandate or offer pre-service training to new foster homes.
- Reasons for not mandating pre-service training for new foster homes included:
 - Lack of Interest
 - Lack of Cooperation
 - Low need
 - Funding/money
 - Disagreement RE: value of PACE
 - "Training" content provided in licensing process
 - Management decision, workload, staff time
 - Numbers too low to offer group training
 - "Strongly urge" but feel that "mandate" is not backed by State in code book
 - License so few homes that training would have to be individual/time consuming
 - All Social Workers already held degrees and have been educated in these areas
 - Lack of resources in the area - often the PACE training is not offered in a location conducive to our families
 - Nearly impossible to train all of PACE (36 hours) prior to licensing of or first placement in a foster home

Survey results specific to **ongoing** training include:

- 47% (28 of 59) of the counties responding to the survey mandate ongoing training, averaging 10 hours annually (range of 6-19 hours), for all foster homes
- Of the 73% (43 of 59) of county respondents that answered the question related to ongoing training modalities, respondents indicated that they allow foster parents to complete ongoing

training by reading materials, viewing videos, attending training sessions, reading training newsletters, and attending support meetings.

- Reasons for not mandating ongoing training for foster homes included:
 - Resources – size of program, staff time
 - What do we do if they don't complete training when we cannot afford to lose a home from our program? Can we mandate if we don't follow through?
 - Worried that added expectations would make people quit
 - Attendance is an issue whether mandated or not; foster parents don't take advantage of training opportunities or "fun" things that are offered
 - Lack of funding – provide what we can but don't mandate it (*overwhelmingly the most common response for not mandating or providing ongoing training*)
 - Pre-service training is the current priority
 - Little ongoing training is available for foster parents
 - Management decision – workload and lack of foster coordinator time (*the second most common response for not mandating or providing ongoing training*)
 - Without state mandates, no funding, time and energy of the only coordinator, ongoing training has been less of a priority
 - As a coordinator with an ongoing caseload, there is no way I can commit myself to mandating training that I then must provide. I would be mandating myself.
 - Time constraints on foster families – they are families where both parents work outside of the home and have other activities for the foster children and their families. This is not a full time job. If a specific family needs training in an area, we have mandated that they attend a certain training being offered. Specialized homes who take on the most extreme children do get 12 hours of mandated ongoing training.

Tribal-Specific Survey Results

Survey responses were received from 5 of the 11 tribal agencies. While the survey response rate was 45%, the information gathered is inconclusive. Two of the tribal agencies responding to the survey have no foster homes and, therefore, did not complete the survey. Of those tribal agencies who have licensed foster homes, only one agency required pre-service training for foster parents and one agency required ongoing training for foster parents. Two tribal agencies supported ongoing training for their foster parents, as it was available around the state.

Private Licensing Agency-Specific Survey Results

Survey responses were received from eight private licensing agencies with a total of 521 foster homes licensed around the state. The average number of new foster homes licensed by these eight agencies on an annual basis is 18 homes (range of 2-60). The average number of currently licensed foster homes is 60 (range of 4-150).

Survey results specific to **pre-service** training include:

- All 8 private licensing agencies responding to the survey mandate pre-service training, averaging 23 hours (range 12-39), for all new foster homes.
- All 8 private licensing agencies responding to the survey require the completion of pre-service training prior to placement for all new foster homes.
- On average, the private licensing agencies offer nine rounds of pre-service training sessions annually (range of 3-24).
- 38% (3 of 8) of the private licensing agencies collaborate with another agency or county in order to conduct and provide pre-service training; responses included:
 - We tell our parents they can access PACE in their local counties but may be charged a fee in order to attend

- Sometimes - use a trainer from another agency to teach de-escalation/crisis management
- Yes-Racine County
- Yes - example \$200 per couple at Washburn County
- 38% (3 of 8) of the private licensing agencies utilize the PACE curriculum to provide their pre-service training; content areas provided by the remainder of the agencies includes:
 - Terms, treatment planning, documentation, referral and matching, policy and procedure, anger management, state regulations, home work assignments
 - Policies, state codes, placement, promoting positive behavior, responding to unacceptable behavior, child development, attachment, separation, de-escalation, sexual abuse, primary families, cultural issues, permanency issues, CPR/first aid
 - PACE I-IV
 - Those outlined in HFS 38
 - Overview of Treatment Foster Care and agency, HFS 56 and 38, resource systems, behavior management, biological families, overview and possible specifics about diagnosis such as ADHD, bi-polar, attachment disorders

Survey results specific to **ongoing** training include:

- All 8 private licensing agencies responding to the survey mandate ongoing training, averaging 24 hours annually (range of 18-36 hours), for all foster homes – note from the agencies: follow code guidelines for ongoing training requirements so either 24 or 18 hours annually depending upon the year.
- All 8 private licensing agencies responding to the survey allow foster parents to complete ongoing training by reading materials, viewing videos, attending training sessions, reading training newsletters, and attending support meetings.

Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) Action Steps and Activities Summary

This section of the report focuses on the short-term goals of the Foster Parent Training Committee which are primarily defined by PEP Action Steps K.4.a. and K.4.b. (Exhibit B).

Within this section, **Pre-Service Training** means training completed prior to first placement, **Foundation Training** means training completed within two years of initial licensure, and **Ongoing Training** means training other than pre-service and foundation that is completed on an annual basis to meet the specific knowledge and skill needs of the foster parents. **Foster Home** includes any home licensed under HFS 56 and HFS 38.

Action Step K. 4. a.

This action step required the formation of a workgroup composed of counties, foster and adoptive parents, tribes, BMCW and the Training Partnerships.

The Foster Parent Training Committee was formed by the Training Council on March 31, 2005. The scope, responsibilities, structure and membership of the committee is defined within the committee's charge (Exhibit A). In addition to those identified above, the committee also has private licensing agency, Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, and DCFS representation.

This action step required the committee to research the impact of mandating statewide foster and adoptive parent pre-service and ongoing training.

The Foster Parent Training Committee developed and distributed (to county and private licensing agency foster care coordinators) a 25 question survey (Exhibit C) that inquired about pre-service and ongoing foster parent training. There was an 82% county response rate, a 45% tribal response rate, and eight private licensing agencies completed the survey.

The Foster Parent Training Committee chose to focus the survey questions around foster, rather than adoptive, parent training because all adoptive parents are first licensed as foster parents. Therefore, pre-service training would apply to all licensed as foster parents. For ongoing training, the committee focused only on ongoing training required/provided to foster parents. Foster care conversion issues were considered and addressed in foster parent ongoing training recommendations.

Ongoing training for adoptive parents needs to be looked at separately as there are different issues to be addressed and additional agencies that need to be involved. At this time, the Foster Parent Training Committee believes that considering ongoing training for adoptive parents is beyond the scope and expertise of the committee.

This action step required the committee to determine, from the research, the following:

1. Current percentage of foster parents attending pre-service and ongoing training on a regular basis.

Pre-Service Training

There are a total of 3,499 foster homes licensed by the 59 counties that responded to the Foster Parent Training Committee Survey. According to the survey results, 76% of the counties responding to the survey mandate pre-service training for all new foster homes, and 63% of counties require previously licensed foster homes to complete pre-service training.

In the 59 counties responding to the survey, an estimated total of 705 new foster home licenses are issued annually. If these numbers and percentages are applied to 2005, 536 of the 705 newly licensed homes would have been mandated to complete pre-service training by their county agency. The remaining 2,794 (3,499 licensed homes minus 705 newly licensed homes) are then considered previously licensed homes. According to survey results, 63% of these previously licensed homes, a total of 1,760, would have been required by their county agencies to complete pre-service training. So, approximately 2,465 of the 3,499 (70%) county licensed homes are attending/have attended foster parent pre-service training. (Note: These are low estimates as many county agencies have required foster parents to complete pre-service training for several years now. The survey did not collect information about how long foster parent pre-service training has been required. Pre-service and ongoing training have been required for treatment foster homes since the Ch. HFS 38, "Treatment Foster Care for Children," was developed in 1996.)

There are a total of 477 foster homes licenses by the 8 private licensing agencies that responded to the Foster Parent Training Survey. According to the survey results, 100% of the agencies responding to the survey mandate pre-service training for all new foster homes, and 63% require previously licensed foster homes to complete pre-service training.

In the 8 private licensing agencies responding to the survey, an estimated total of 142 new foster home licenses are issued annually. If these numbers and percentages are applied to 2005, 142 of the 142 newly licensed homes would have been mandated to complete pre-service training by their private licensing agency. The remaining 335 (477 licensed homes minus 142 newly licensed homes) are then considered previously licensed homes. According to survey results, 63% of these previously licensed homes, a total of 211, would have been required by their private

licensing agencies to complete pre-service training. So, approximately 353 of the 477(74%) private agency licensed homes are attending/have attended foster parent pre-service training. (Note: These are low estimates as agencies required foster parents to complete pre-service training specific to HFS 38. The survey did not collect information about how many previously licensed homes had not completed pre-service training.)

Ongoing Training

In the 59 counties responding to the Foster Parent Training Committee Survey, 69% make ongoing training available to foster parents, primarily as offered outside of the agency. Forty-seven percent of the counties mandate ongoing training for all foster homes. Based upon the 47% of counties that require foster parents to complete ongoing training, a conservative estimate of attendance at ongoing training in 2005 is that 1,313 foster homes (47% of the 2,794 previously licensed foster homes) completed an average of 10 hours of ongoing training. (Presumably, the newly licensed homes are completing pre-service training during their first year, based upon pre-service training survey results).

In the 8 private licensing agencies responding to the Foster Parent Training Committee Survey, 100% make ongoing training available to foster parents and 100% percent mandate ongoing training, averaging 24 hours annually, for all foster homes.

2. Capacity to provide pre-service training on a regular basis.

Based upon the Foster Parent Training Committee Survey Results, most county agencies responding to the survey (76%) have created the internal capacity to provide pre-service training averaging 30 hours. (However, pre-service currently does not mean pre-placement, but can span a time frame of up to several years for the foster parent completion of the pre-service training.) For those agencies not offering foster parent pre-service training, staff time, resources, and a lack of foster parents have been cited as the most pressing issues. Additionally, an issue for some of the rural counties has been the limited number of foster parents a county agency licenses at any one time or in any year, making the group training modality prohibitive to these agencies. Many of these agencies are in areas of the state where their surrounding county neighbors face the same issue in regards to limited numbers of newly licensed foster homes.

Foster homes licensed by private licensing agencies are already required per HFS 38 to complete pre-service training, so capacity is not an issue.

[The Foster Parent Training Committee believes that, if pre-service foster parent training is defined according to the recommendations found later in this report and if the resource needs identified in the next section are met, county agencies will have the capacity to provide the pre-service foster parent training on a regular basis or as needed/as foster homes are licensed. Committee recommendations are such that most of the pre-service training (estimated 15 hours in length) will be completed in conjunction with the licensing process. Some of the training content may not be covered during the licensing process. Resource materials will be developed and distributed to all licensing agencies to allow licensing agencies to train these areas in either a face-to-face group or face-to-face individual modality.

For the committee recommended foundation foster parent training, many county agencies will have the capacity to provide this training. Currently, 76% of the counties responding to the survey require their foster parents to complete an average of 30 hours of training by the end of their first two years of licensure. The committee is recommending approximately 24 hours of foundation training to be completed within 24 months of licensure. These 24 hours are consistent

with the average practice of the county agencies responding to the survey. Although the group training modality is the preferred training modality for foundation training, resource materials will be developed and distributed to all licensing agencies to allow agencies to train foundation training in either a face-to-face group or face-to-face individual modality. If the resource needs identified in the next section are met, the committee believes that the capacity issues for the remaining county agencies in the state can be addressed with the counties, Training Partnerships, and DCFS working together.]

3. Resource needs to provide pre-service training to all foster and adoptive parents.

The committee believes that the primary resource to support licensing agencies in providing pre-service (pre-placement) [and foundation (within first two years of initial licensure)] foster parent training will be the availability of pre-service [and foundation] foster parent curriculum in a variety of modalities – Western and NEW Partnerships have committed some of their CY2006 PEP monies to the development of these materials, to be made available to all licensing agencies statewide

Continuation of Title IV-E pass-through monies to county agencies for pre-service foster parent training – with the memo to be revised to assure flexibility [and to be consistent with the foster parent training recommendations]

[Expansion of the Title IV-E pass-through monies to county agencies for foundation foster parent training – with the memo to be revised to assure flexibility and to be consistent with the foster parent training recommendations]

Clear communication to county agencies about the availability of Title IV-E pass-through dollars for foster parent pre-service [and foundation] training, including when exceptions apply

The continuation of the current level of county support of foster parent training

[Fiscal resources as identified in Exhibit D.]

4. Extent and availability of current (ongoing) training and need for additional training.

Based upon survey results, ongoing foster parent training resources and opportunities that are not agency provided are minimal.

Additional ongoing training opportunities and resources are needed. The committee believes that the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center's resource library will be vital to meeting the ongoing training needs of foster parents.

Additionally, for those agencies that want to develop and provide ongoing foster parent training/resources to their foster parents, the committee recommends the expansion of the Title IV-E pass-through dollars to include ongoing foster parent training activities and costs.

5. Assess ability to document training participation in WiSACWIS.

Foster parent training participation could be documented in eWiSACWIS. The training tab on the foster home record would have to be modified similar to the modifications that are being made to the training tab on the worker record to track completion dates for pre-service,

foundation and ongoing training. DCFS would need about six months to make the change in the system.

6. Identify if revisions to HFS 56 are necessary.

Currently, changes to HFS 56 and HFS 38 are not necessary. When foster parent training becomes mandatory, then HFS 56 will need to be revised. At that time, HFS 38 will also need to be reviewed to determine if revisions to it are necessary.

Action Step K. 4. b.

This action step required the specification/definition of foster/adoptive parent pre-service and ongoing training needs.

The Foster Parent Training Committee developed and distributed a four question survey to foster parents that asked foster parents to rank order the importance of content areas prior to licensure/first placement and within the first two years/licensing period and to identify ongoing training needs. Additionally, committee members reviewed national resources that evaluated foster parent training priorities and identified training needs for foster parents prior to first placement and on an ongoing basis. Finally, committee members reviewed current Wisconsin pre-service training content, both PACE and county developed. This information, as well as the survey distributed to foster care coordinators (Exhibit C), informed the committee's recommendations about foster parent training.

The committee defined a Guiding Principle and Six Goals for foster parent training at all levels. Additionally, the committee defined three levels of foster parent training – pre-service (prior to licensure or first placement), foundation (within two years of initial license), and ongoing – which are found in the Foster Parent Training Recommendations section later in this report.

This action step required the following tasks:

1. Specifically define pre-service training requirements based upon competencies and identify curriculum that can be used (including PACE).

The Foster Parent Training Committee recommends the following for foster parent pre-service training requirements:

- *Pre-service training means that the pre-service training be completed before or after licensure but before first placement*
- *Pre-service training of approximately 15 hours (dependent upon modality) be completed in conjunction with the licensing process*
- *Agencies have flexible modalities(face-to-face individual, face-to-face group, or a combination of the two) to provide pre-service training*
- *Pre-service training be defined by content areas based upon the six goals of foster parent training to include foster parent expectations; agency / system laws and processes; and needed information (more detailed information about the six goals and the topics in each content area can be found in the recommendations section later in this report)*
- *The PACE curriculum be used as the base in the content sections of the pre-service training that are not agency specific (see the highlighted areas found in the recommendations section later in this report)*

[The Foster Parent Training Committee recommends that all foster parents be required to complete pre-service training prior to licensure or first placement, with the pre-service training

being developed by the training partnerships to be congruent with the foster care licensing process.

The Foster Parent Training Committee also recommends that all foster parents be required to complete foundation training within 24 months of initial licensure, with the existing PACE curriculum being used as the bedrock of the foundation training.

Pre-service and foundation foster parent training recommendations can be found in the recommendations section later in this report.]

2. Identify competencies that ongoing training will be based on and the hours of required training.

The Foster Parent Training Committee recommends the following for ongoing foster parent training:

- *Ongoing foster parent training be based upon the six goals of foster parent training (rather than competencies) later identified in the foster parent training recommendations section of this report (so, any ongoing training completed by foster parents and treatment foster parents would need to meet one of the six goals of foster parent training)*
 - *[Following completion of foundation training timelines], all foster parents complete 10 hours (treatment foster parents 18 hours) of training per year or 20 hours (treatment foster parents 36 hours) of training in each succeeding two-year re-licensing period.*
3. Develop criteria for determining equivalencies and/or exemptions for pre-service and ongoing training.

****Refer to the Foster Parent Training Recommendations section of this report for complete recommendations prior to reviewing this section****

Exceptions to the time frames for completing pre-service training: The Foster Parent Training Committee recommends the following – In the event that pre-service training content areas cannot be reviewed and discussed with both foster parent licensees in a home receiving emergency placements or being licensed for specific children, then pre-service training for the second foster parent licensee will need to be completed in a time frame not to exceed 120 days.

[No exceptions to foundation training are recommended by the Foster Parent Training Committee.]

No exceptions to ongoing training hour completion are recommended by the Foster Parent Training Committee.

[The criteria and language to be included in the numbered memo and administrative rules around equivalencies and/or exemptions need further discussion between DCFS and the Foster Parent Training Committee before recommendations can be made to the Training Council.]

4. Modify any related numbered memos or administrative rules.

Modifications to numbered memos: The Foster Parent Training Committee is currently working with DCFS staff for suggested changes to Numbered Memo 2002-12 (“Foster Parent Pre-Service Training and Federal Title IV-E Reimbursement”). As noted previously in the report, the Committee recommends the expansion of Title IV-E pass-through funds to include foundation and

ongoing foster parent training. DCFS staff have had initial discussions with the Committee about the language to be included in the memo for exemptions to pre-service and foundation training..

Modifications to administrative rules: Currently, the Foster Parent Training Committee believes that changes to HFS 56 and HFS 38 are not necessary. When foster parent training becomes mandatory, then HFS 56 will need to be revised. At that time, HFS 38 will also need to be reviewed to determine if revisions to it are necessary.

5. Develop a method to consistently document training information in the foster care record.

The Foster Parent Training Committee identified eWiSACWIS as a method to consistently document training information in the foster care record.

Foster Parent Training Recommendations

This section of the report focuses on the activities of the Foster Parent Training Committee that lie outside of the PEP specific responsibilities.

Guiding Principle: All children who are placed in foster care or for adoption deserve well-trained and supported resource families. In order to develop the knowledge and skills of the resource families, pre-service, foundation, and ongoing training will be made available to resource families who are entrusted with the care of our most vulnerable children.

The six **goals** for foster parent training at all levels – pre-service, foundation, and ongoing - are:

- Goal 1: Improve the quality of care provided to children who live in foster or adoptive homes.
- Goal 2: Prepare foster and adoptive families for caring for and providing stability for children while in their homes.
- Goal 3: Promote communication, respect, and understanding among all working for the best interest of the child.
- Goal 4: Provide opportunities to mutually explore one’s values, strengths, limitations, and needs as they relate to the compatibility to foster and adopt children.
- Goal 5: Develop an understanding of the child welfare system and the importance of permanency for children.
- Goal 6: Encourage foster and adoptive parent networking and the use of resources.

Pre-Service Foster Parent Training

- ✓ Pre-Service Training Summary Statement: All foster parent licensees will have pre-service training, covering all of the content areas, reviewed and discussed with them prior to the placement of a foster child in their care.
- ✓ Agencies would have the flexibility to require any other adult (non-licensee) who lives in the home to complete any or all of the pre-service training, as deemed appropriate by the licensing agency.
- ✓ Based upon modality (face-to-face group, face-to-face individual, video/audio, on-line), pre-service training will range from 9-15 hours.
- ✓ Pre-service training will be completed before or after licensure but before first placement.

- ✓ Pre-service training will be agency-implemented. Agencies will have flexible modalities in providing the pre-service training.
- ✓ The Pre-service training will be able to be completed in conjunction with the licensing process.
- ✓ The Training Partnerships, Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, and DCFS will support pre-service training through curriculum development and provision of supporting materials (Foster Parent Handbook, videos, manuals). A template will be developed that will contain the content areas and supporting materials for agencies to use in providing pre-service training for foster parents. The content areas of pre-service training identified below will be the minimum pre-service training content that all foster parents must have pre-placement. Agencies will be free to require more than the minimum, but at least the minimum must be provided.
- ✓ Costs – there does not appear to be significant additional agency costs to offer pre-service training. Based upon the survey results from 59 county survey responses, 75% require foster parents to complete an average of 30 hours of pre-service training as currently defined. Based upon conversations with foster care coordinators, many of them cover the primary fostering issues during the licensing process even if there is not formal pre-service training provided. (This will help structure the conversations during the licensing process.)

Content Areas:

1. Foster Parent Expectations:

- *Meeting the basic needs (medical care, clothes, supplies, dental needs, etc)
- *Transportation
- *Guidance and Positive Discipline
- *Training
- *Visitation / Shared Parenting – Maintaining Family Connectedness
- *Confidentiality
- *Maintaining culture
- *Foster home disclosure

2. Agency / system laws and process:

- *Goals of the child welfare system – safety and permanence
- *Legal process / laws – definitions of abuse and neglect; Chafee (Independent Living)
- *Purpose of foster care /adoption
- *Agency policies
- *Reimbursement
- *All parties rights
- *Confidentiality
- *Roles/ relationships/”teaming”

3. Needed Information:

- *Child development
- *Grief/ loss & separation
- *Sexually abused children
- *Effects of fostering on your family (discuss safe environments)
- *Access to resources

Note: The highlighted areas in the Pre-Service training are content areas expanded on in Foundation Training.

The PACE curriculum will be used as the base in the content sections of the pre-service training that are not agency specific (these are the highlighted content areas) and in the foundation training.

- *Keeping you and your foster child safe
- *LBGT

Foundation Foster Parent Training

- ✓ Based upon modality (face-to-face group, face-to-face individual, video/audio), foundation training will range from 18-24 hours. Any video/audio training would be for supplementary purposes only.
- ✓ Foundation training will be completed within 24 months of initial licensure.
- ✓ The foundation foster parent training content areas defined below will be the foundation training content that all foster parents must have within the first 24 months of initial licensure, whether provided in a group or individual face-to-face. The content cannot simply be provided as informational.
- ✓ Each agency will have flexibility in how foundation training is provided, but the committee believes that the training should be provided in a group setting and include a foster parent as one of the trainers, if at all possible.
- ✓ For foundation training that is provided individual face-to-face, a connection for the foster parent being trained needs to be made to another/other foster parent(s). Foster Parents who are trained individually by a coordinator or other agency staff must be provided with networking to another foster parent(s). The committee discussed a Foster Parent Mentoring Group/Foster Parent Co-Trainer Liaison where seasoned foster parents could be paid to be available to consult with new foster parents as they are completing the foundation level training. Need to explore if the partnerships could pay for the co-trainer liaison as a training expense. Suggestion was made to look at what Iowa is doing.
- ✓ Provision of foundation training will be developed and provided in partnership with the licensing agency, training partnerships and Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center.
- ✓ Costs – Based upon the survey results from 59 county survey responses, 75% (44 of 59) require foster parents to complete an average of 30 hours of PACE training, as currently defined, within 2 years. Therefore, there does not appear to be a substantial additional cost to any of these 44 agencies.

Content Areas

- 1. Partners in Permanency (need to add a competency around effective communication and working together toward permanency – discuss permanency options, concurrent planning and independent living – “Losing Jason” article)*
- 2. Understanding the Effects of Fostering on Your Family (Follow up with more on safe environment in the home in this section)*
- 3. Dynamics of Abuse and Neglect* (Prerequisite for The Impact of Trauma on Child Development) (integrate sexual abuse here and discuss all types of maltreatment in this section)*
- 4. The Impact of Trauma on Child Development*
- 5. Attachment, Separation and Placement*

6. *Guidance and Positive Discipline*

7. *Maintaining Family Connectedness*

8. *Cultural Dynamics in Placement*

Ongoing Foster Parent Training

****The recommendations in this section apply to foster and treatment foster parents, except where differences are explicitly stated****

- ✓ Following the completion of foundation training timelines, foster parents will complete 10 hours of training per year or 20 hours of training in each succeeding two-year re-licensing period. Treatment foster parents will complete 18 hours of training per year or 36 hours of training in each succeeding two-year re-licensing period following the completion of foundation training timelines.
- ✓ Foster parent can earn up to one-half of their training hours in each re-licensing period by providing training.
- ✓ During each foster home re-licensing process, foster parents will complete a self-assessment tool (to be developed by the Foster Parent Training Committee) that will identify informational needs of the foster parents and will assist the licensing agency in directing foster parents to resources that will meet their needs.
- ✓ Any ongoing training completed by foster parents must meet one of the six goals of foster parent training as defined earlier in this section.
- ✓ Training modalities can include face-to-face group, face-to-face individual, face-to-face consultation with other involved professionals, video/audio/web-based, written materials, and conferences/workshops/seminars, as approved by the licensing agency. Training does not need to be only agency initiated/provided but can be obtained by foster parents through community agencies, such as schools, churches, hospitals, UW-Extension, and training partnerships.
- ✓ A resource library to be maintained by the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center in order to assist licensing agencies in the provision of ongoing foster parent training.
- ✓ Costs – Based upon the survey results, 47% (28 of 59) of county agencies require foster parents to complete an average of 10 hours of ongoing training per year. County agencies site resources, staff time, availability of reasonably priced training opportunities, and funding as barriers to requiring ongoing foster parent training. Based upon the survey results, there are serious implications/challenges in the ability of county agencies for the direct provision of ongoing foster parent training. With the array of training modalities available and the maintenance of a resource library, ongoing foster parent training becomes more feasible. Finally, additional means of developing and delivering ongoing training specific to the unique needs of foster parents need continued exploration.
- ✓ For those agencies that want to develop and provide ongoing foster parent training/resources to their foster parents, the committee recommends the expansion of the Title IV-E pass-through dollars to include ongoing foster parent training activities and costs.

Literature Review / Resources

Based upon findings in the Child and Family Service Reviews, Wisconsin is one of only 7 states nationally that do not require pre-service training prior to licensure or ongoing training of foster parents beyond pre-service training. In order to meet substantial conformity for the systemic factor staff and provider training, “the state must provide training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state-licensed or –approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under Title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children” (“Training of Child Welfare Staff and Providers: Findings from the Child and Family Service Review,” Jerry Milner and Will Hornsby, in *Protecting Children*, 2004, vol. 19, no.3).

In addition to the utilizing feedback from the foster parent survey, the committee gathered and looked at research and publications from around the nation to guide decision-making and recommendations, including the following:

- “For the Sake of the Children: Restructuring Foster Care in California,” April 9, 1992, Report #115.
- “Evaluating a Title IV-E Foster Parent Training Program: Context, Outcomes, and Contributions to Foster Care,” John B. Cook and Jane M. Fletcher, April 2005.
- “Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families: Promising Practices and Lessons Learned,” Casey Family Programs, 2005.
- “Children, Families, and Foster Care: Analysis and Recommendations,” Sandra Bass, Margie K. Shields, and Richard E. Behrman, in *The Future of Children*, vol. 14, no.1.
- “Understanding Foster Parenting: Using Administrative Data to Explore Retention,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, January 2005.

This report is respectfully submitted by the active members of the Foster Parent Training Committee,

Audrey Koch, Waushara County; Dawn Douglas, Dane County; Debbie Kuehn, Foster/Adoptive Parent; Jean Farnham-Davy, PATH; Jean Van Groll, Winnebago County; Karel McGeary, Foster Parent; Kate Johnson and Tracey Theise-Hover, BPP/DCFS; Lisa Alden, Waukesha County; Sherrill Jahr, Eau Claire County; Oriana Carey, Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center; Don Gjesfjeld, Western Partnership; and Stephanie Reilly, NEW Partnership.

The committee wishes to extend a thank you to those who have participated at specific times during the past 10 months: Julie Brown, formally of LSS-Milwaukee and now with the Milwaukee Training Partnership; Debra Kutchera, LSS-Milwaukee; Lynn Wilkins, Adoptive Parent; and Heather Halonie, ICW Training Partnership.

EXHIBIT A

Foster Parent Training Committee Charge

(A committee of the Wisconsin Training Council)

March 31, 2005

Scope of the Committee: The purpose of the Foster Parent Training Committee is to coordinate the development and delivery of high-quality, competency-based pre-service and ongoing training for foster parents, treatment foster parents, and adoptive parents in order to strengthen the quality of care for children. The training will be consistent with the philosophy and competencies of the worker, supervisor and administrator training provided by the five training partnerships in Wisconsin.

Responsibilities of the Committee: The work of the committee will include:

Short-Term Goals:

- Research on the impact of mandating statewide foster and adoptive parent pre-service and ongoing training, as identified within the PEP (K.4.a., Steps 1-6)
- Advisement on the development and delivery of pre-service training for foster and adoptive parents, as identified within the PEP (K.4.b.)
- Recommendations to the Training Council on competencies and curriculum for pre-service foster and adoptive parent training (K.4.b)
- Advisement on the development and delivery of ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents, as identified within the PEP (K.4.c., Steps 2-7)
- Recommendations on the inclusion of treatment foster parents in pre-service and ongoing training, to include discussions with the Fiscal Committee on the financial issues
- Recommendations on the inclusion of adoptive parents (pre-adoptive and foster parent conversion) in pre-service and ongoing training, to include discussions with the Fiscal Committee on the financial issues
- Discussions with the Evaluation Committee to assure the development of evaluation tools to analyze the impact of foster and adoptive parent pre-service and ongoing training

Long-Term Goals:

- Regular review of the foster and adoptive parent pre-service and ongoing training competencies
- Assessment of foster and adoptive parent ongoing training needs
- Gathering of input from foster and adoptive parents on their ongoing training needs

Structure of the Committee: The Foster Parent Training Committee is co-chaired by the two training partnership representatives. The committee will meet on a quarterly basis or more frequently, as determined by the committee, in order to fulfill its responsibilities. The committee will maintain minutes of its meetings and present these to the Training Council on a regular basis. Representation on the committee is defined below and can be expanded as recommended by the Training Council. Committee membership includes:

- County representatives – 4
- Tribal representative – 1
- Milwaukee partner agency representative – 1
- Foster Parent representatives – 2
- Adoptive Parent representative - 1
- Resource Center representative – 1
- DCFS/BPP representative – 1
- Training Partnership representatives – 2
- Treatment Foster Parent agency representative – 1

EXHIBIT B

Outcome/Systemic Factor:	Well-Being 1	
Performance Item: 17 34	Needs and services of child, parents and foster parents. Foster and adoptive parent training	
PEP Strategy:	2) Improve Wisconsin's capacity to provide quality foster care to children when they cannot be safe at home. 3) Strengthen and diversify the child welfare workforce and build our capacity to serve families and keep children safe. 5) Collaborate with agencies and systems to improve family access to services that ensure children are safe and healthy.	
Performance Goal:	Year 1: 1% improvement for Item 17.	Year 2: 2% improvement for Item 17.
Measurement Method:	Item 17, Benchmarks K.1 - K.4 - A special case review will be conducted in Q2 to collect data that will be used along with CFSR results for Item 17 to establish the baseline performance level. The CFSR-style case reviews described in Action Step Q will be used to provide data for the quarterly progress reports. In addition, the existing WiSACWIS Placement Stability report will be used to measure the impact of foster parent support on placement stability. Item 34, Benchmarks K.5 and K.6 - A survey will be conducted to determine the number of foster/adoptive parents who have complete pre-service and ongoing training as a percentage of total foster/adoptive parents to establish baseline data. Data will be collected on training activities to determine the additional number of persons trained.	

COMMENTS:

Action Steps	Benchmark Tasks	Responsible Party/Parties	Benchmark Achievement Dates
K. Increase the effectiveness of support for foster parents by improving their access to information, training and resources.	<u>Services to Foster Parents</u>		
	K.1.a Hold regional focus groups with foster parents, child placing agencies, contracted service providers and county foster care coordinators to:	BPP & Workgroup Partners	Q2
	1) Identify the service and support needs of foster parents.		Q2
	2) Develop a profile of needs and identify gaps in services and supports.		Q3
	3) Develop recommendations for responding to the identified needs.		Q3
	4) Develop requirement for developing support plans for foster parents by numbered memo and later Ch. HFS 44.	BPP	Q4
5) Develop curriculum for and provide training on foster parent support needs for joint trainings involving child welfare caseworkers and foster parents.	BPP & Training Partnerships	Q4	
	K.2.a Seek input from Counties, BMCW, Tribes, and Foster Parents to develop an instrument that will guide foster care coordinators and child welfare workers in assessing a child's special needs.	BPP & Consultation Partners	Q4

Action Steps

K. (Cont.)

Benchmark Tasks	Responsible Party/Parties	Benchmark Achievement Dates
K.2.a 1) Pilot and modify the assessment instrument, as needed.	BPP & BMCW	Q5
K.2.b Provide training and technical assistance to foster care coordinators and child welfare workers on: 1) General support needs of foster parents 2) How to assess for a child's unique needs in a specific foster home and the support needs of the child's foster parents.	BPP, Area Administration & Training Partnerships	Q6
<u>Resource Center</u> K.3 Develop a Foster and Care and Adoption Resource Center that provides telephone support and referral, training of foster care coordinators and eventually increased training for foster parents. 1) Design Resource Center concept 2) Conduct RFP Process and issue contract 3) Opening of the Resource Center	BPP & Consultation Partners BPP BPP with Resource Center	Q2 Q1 Q1 Q2
<u>Pre-service and Ongoing Training</u> K.4.a Form a workgroup composed of Counties, Foster and Adoptive Parents, Tribes, BMCW and Training Partnerships to research the impact of mandating statewide foster and adoptive parent pre-service and ongoing training and determine: 1) Current percentage of foster parents attending pre-service and ongoing foster parent training (this data would be used a baseline data). 2) Capacity to provide pre-service training on a regular basis. 3) Resource needs to provide pre-service training to all foster and adoptive parents. 4) Extent and availability of current training and need for additional training.	BPP & Workgroup Partners	Q5

5) Assess ability to document training participation in WiSACWIS.		
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Action Steps	Benchmark Tasks	Responsible Party/Parties	Benchmark Achievement Dates
K. (Cont.)	K.4.a 6) Identify if revisions to HFS 56 are necessary.	BPP & Workgroup Partners	Q5
	K.4.b Specify/define foster/adoptive parent pre-service and ongoing training needs. 1) Specifically define pre-service training requirements based on competencies and identify curriculum that can be used (including PACE). 2) Identify competencies that ongoing training will be based on and the hours of required training. 3) Develop criteria for determining equivalencies and or exemptions for pre-service and ongoing training. 4) Modify any related numbered memos or administrative rules. 5) Develop a method to consistently document training information in the foster care record.	BPP, Resource Center and Training Partnerships	Q6

Action Steps	Benchmark Tasks	Responsible Party/Parties	Benchmark Achievement Dates
K. (Cont.)	<u>Foster Parent Handbook</u>		
	K.5.a Create workgroup composed of BMCW, Counties, Tribes, private agency staff, attorneys and foster parents to identify purpose, audience, and uniform content of a model handbook	BPP and Workgroup Partners	Q5
	1) In conjunction with the workgroup, develop model handbook and submit for review by all counties, private agencies, tribes, legal staff, etc.	BPP	Q6
	2) Finalize and distribute model handbook.	BPP with Counties & BMCW	Q7
	3) Communicate the requirement that Counties and other licensing agencies develop foster parent handbooks in consultation with their foster parents.	BPP & BMCW	Q7
4) Have all licensing agencies provide orientation/training on use of handbook.	BPP with Counties, BMCW and Licensing Agencies	Q8	
K.5.b	Include in foster parent handbook information on using and accessing community resources.	BPP with Counties & BMCW	Q7
K.5.c	Revise Chs. HFS 38, 54 and 56, if applicable, to require private child placing agencies to develop foster parent handbooks in consultation with their foster parents.	BPP & BRL	Q8
	<u>Measurement</u>		
K.6.	Develop data for measurement:		
1)	Conduct special case study.	BPP, OPEP & QA Contractor	Q3
2)	Conduct survey on training.	BPP & OPEP	Q3 and ongoing

Notes – Outcome / Systemic Factor:

K.2, K.4 and K.5 - BMCW involvement includes the Milwaukee Out-of-Home Care (foster home recruitment and licensing) contractor

EXHIBIT C

Foster Parent Training Committee Survey

The Foster Parent Training Committee is a subcommittee of the Statewide Training Council whose membership includes counties, tribes, BMCW, foster and adoptive parents, DCFS and training partnerships. This survey is being conducted in accordance with the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) recommendations to identify the current practice throughout the state for pre-service and on-going training for **foster parents**, **treatment foster parents** and **pre-adoptive parents**. This information will assist the Foster Parent Training Committee in making further recommendations to the larger Training Council. We greatly appreciate your assistance in completing this survey.

Agency Name _____ Person Completing _____

1. How many foster homes do you have licensed at this time? # _____
2. On average, how many new foster home licenses do you issue on an annual basis? # _____

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING QUESTIONS

3. Do you mandate pre-service training for all new foster homes? YES NO
4. Do you require pre-service training for currently or previously licensed foster homes who did not complete pre-service training for their initial license? YES NO
5. If YES to question #4, what percent of your currently licensed foster homes have completed the training?
_____ %
6. What pre-service training curriculum do you use?
7. How many hours of pre-service training are required? # of hours _____
8. What content areas are covered in your pre-service training? Please list and describe.
9. What methods of presentation do you use?
10. If it is a 2-parent foster home, do you require both foster parents to attend training? YES NO
11. Is pre-service training required prior to licensure? YES NO
12. Is pre-service training required prior to a placement? YES NO
13. If "no" to questions #11 and #12, within what timeframe is pre-service training required?

14. How many pre-service training sessions do you offer every year? # _____

15. What are the estimated costs to your agency to conduct the entire pre-service training session(s)? Please list total cost and identify sources of cost (cost includes materials and staff salary including overtime and any other expenses such as purchase of videos, etc.).

16. Do you collaborate with any other county or agency to conduct pre-service training? If yes, please list and describe.

17. Do you require agency social workers and other agency staff to attend the foster parent pre-service training that you offer?

YES NO

18. If you do not mandate pre-service training, what is the reason (ie. Resources, funding, need, etc)?

ONGOING TRAINING QUESTIONS

19. Do you offer ongoing training for foster parents? YES NO

20. What curriculum do you use?

21. If you access ongoing training for foster parents outside of your agency, please describe.

22. Do you mandate on-going training for foster parents? YES NO

23. If yes, how many hours? # _____

24. Are foster parents allowed to complete on-going training by reading materials, viewing videos, attending support meetings? Please describe the various ways you allow foster parents to meet your training requirement for ongoing training.

25. If you do not mandate ongoing training, what is the reason (ie. Resources, funding, need, etc)?

Thank you for your time in completing this survey! Please return completed survey to:

Stephanie Reilly
NEW Partnership for Children and Families
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
2420 Nicolet Drive, CL 750
Green Bay, WI 54311-7001

EXHIBIT D

The information about fiscal resources will be shared with the Training Council at the March 23, 2006 meeting and integrated into the report after the meeting.

The minutes from the March 23 Training Council Meeting related to the Foster Parent Committee presentation are:

Foster Parent Training- Don and Stephanie reported. Gave a brief history of foster parent training in Wisconsin. The idea of training foster parents came up early in the development of the partnerships. Currently county agencies provide PACE either pre-placement, within 2 years or have no time requirement for training. Not sure that PACE = everything that is needed for pre-service or foundation content.

Discussion Items

#1 Discussion around what if one parent does the pre service and the other doesn't? What is the consequence?

#2 There was a committee recommendation to restructure Foster Parent Training to have pre-service (pre-placement), Foundation and ongoing components similar to worker training.

#3 The committee agrees that there is a need for statewide consistency for pre-service and foundation training. Can build on existing use of PACE training. Need flexibility in how to deliver training.

#4 PEP requirement is to develop foster parent training recommendations. The State has flexibility for when to implement statewide training program.

#5 The training system currently lacks statewide capacity for delivery of ongoing training. Will need resources to enhance capacity for pre-service and foundation. There are concerns about implementing statewide training requirements until there is improved capacity.

#6 Training requirements must apply to treatment and privately licensed foster parents as well as county licensed foster homes. Need to involve private agencies in foster parent training committee.

#7 How do these recommendations impact pre-adoptive or adoptive parents? AB521 regarding training for all adoptive parents will have an impact on these recommendations.

John recommended that the motion to the training council be that the training council give feedback that the committee is on the right track vs. endorsing the recommendations to mandate training recommendations.

**** Motion** The Training Council endorses the guiding principles and six goals and the ideas to develop pre service, foundation and ongoing foster parent training as they relate to foster parents, Treatment Foster Parents and adoptive parents. Motion made by Stephanie Reilly. Seconded by Sally Biddick. Motion passed. The foster parent training committee will update its charge to include additional members.**

Because the Training Council chose not to endorse the recommendations to mandate training at this time, a specific discussion about fiscal resources needed to implement mandatory training did not occur.