

**Special Services Advisory Committee Meeting
Waukesha County DHHS – Brookfield Room
January 15, 2009**

Members Present: Trisha Nepper, Teri O’Grady, Mary Jo Foye, Missy Kueht-Becker, Jesus Mireles, Don Daniels, Lorie Johnston, Kate Wallenslager

Members Absent: Dennis Farrell, Eve Altizer, Barbara Fredericks, Mary Beth Jezo-Sywoulka, Stephanie Mauck, Sherry Perez, Ken & Julie Perkins, Lori Turim, Bonnie Siegel, Cheri Sylla, Sharon Fliess, Kathy Evans, Julie Turkoske, Nichole Hunkins, Sheryl Gerstl, Ann Shurte

Attendance was affected by cold weather, which resulted in the closing of schools.

Special Services Advisory Meeting began at 1:12 PM.

Agenda item #1: Introductions

Introductions.

Agenda item #2: Approval of Minutes

Don Daniels asked for comments on the Special Services Advisory Committee Meeting minutes from October 23, 2008. Jesse Mireles asked to table the approval of the minutes because of the low number of members able to attend this meeting. Lorie Johnston second. Minutes are tabled until the next SSAC meeting.

Agenda item #3: Other Items from the floor

Missy Kueht-Becker talked about satisfaction protocol, surveys, etc. for the Birth-to-Three program. B-3 sent a client satisfaction survey in 2007, with a “decent return”. In 2008, B-3 used the State-supplied survey. The State has told Missy that the rate of return was “poor” and, no results are available or would be forthcoming.

Don has sent out surveys (for CLTS) each year from 2004 – 2007, receiving an approximate 35-40% return. In 2008, the County did not send out its own survey and instead relied on the State-supplied survey. While the rate of return of the State form is unknown, the results were said to be broken down by county. Don has not received any feedback from the State regarding the results.

Trisha Nepper stated that the last FSP survey was sent approximately 6 yrs ago. She promised to find those results and show them to Don.

The committee discussed whether to have a county-specific survey, and whether that should include all three programs in one survey. The committee does not want to overwhelm families. Mary Jo Foye feels that surveys are a good idea for feedback, but worried about parents being given too many surveys (school, Children’s Hospital, etc). Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of a survey, including its length and the staff time to send them, etc. Don clarified that the State waiver survey is not an annual survey. Missy replied that the B-3 surveys did not see a good return.

Don asked to table the discussion and to continue at the next SSAC meeting.

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Agenda item #4 & #5: Continued discussion of Waiver/FSP/UCP merge and policies

Jesse spoke about the completion of the combined application for all programs. He explained that there is now a single application for both waiver and FSP. Don, Lorie and Trisha have developed new forms and met with the Access unit to discuss and implement the changes. Cases move to the Special Needs Unit Supervisor (Don) after application is complete. FSP Social Workers and Don discuss what program will best meet the child's needs. Lorie and Trisha are scheduled to complete at least one visit together for cross training purposes and to help determine a protocol for the assessment process.

Mary Jo asked if there is a hub to connect families with the separate programs. She further explained that she had to call different people/agencies regarding the Katie Beckett Program (KBP), MA mileage reimbursement, Waiver, and FSP. Mary Jo questioned how the Katie Beckett application process and the waiver application process connect. Don explained that in the past, the families applied for each program separately. In the current process, a child qualifying for the waiver automatically qualifies for FSP, and will be included on the waiting list for that funding unless the family is not interested. The family no longer has to "discover" and apply for that program separately. Our current approach encourages families to apply for any/all funding available though the county. The Functional Screen is used to determine eligibility for both FSP and the Waiver.

Don went on to say that The Katie Beckett Program and the waiver application process are not connected. If a family applies for KBP, the county does not get involved unless KBP refers the child to the county. Similarly if a family applies for the waiver, we advise them not to simultaneously apply to KBP. Eligibility requirements are the same for both programs. Once a child is approved for placement on the waiver waiting list, he/she automatically receives "While-You-Wait MA," which is essentially the same thing as Katie Beckett MA.

Don stated that staff have successfully merged some UCP cases with the waiver. This includes the waiver taking over the UCP funding for children in the ongoing phase of the waiver (for children with autism) to free up more UCP money for children waiting for UCP respite. Nicole Hunkins will soon start transferring funding for another 50-60 kids.

Don explained that there is a similar plan to merge ongoing waiver cases and FSP. This process has not yet started, however. If the needed service is waiver allowable, it will be covered through the waiver. That will free up FSP dollars to serve more kids off the waiting list. Staff have started with five children. Don clarified that there is no impact whatsoever in terms of services to the child/family. The child will receive the same service, but the funding will come from a different source. This merge would not decrease the child's available waiver funding. Don also explained that FSP funding could purchase items/services that are not waiver-allowable, because that program is more flexible. This flexibility will remain an option for families. In response to Mary Jo's request for a list of allowable services/items, Don explained that that no such list

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exists. He explained that families can access to the Waiver and FSP manuals online. Those would provide families with the guidelines that service coordinators use in making funding decisions. Lorie explained that the State wants counties to focus on outcomes-based planning. Rather than making lists of items/services that a child could/might want, the worker and the family together should identify needs that the child has currently, and use funding to support those needs.

Don moved the discussion to FSP funding. The FSP manual states that a county can award funding “not in excess of \$3000”. Historically, Waukesha County has awarded the maximum amount to most children who came off the wait list. Don stated the county’s desire to change that and have the award amount be based on need. The intent with this decision, as with all other changes that have been suggested recently, is to make limited dollars stretch as far as possible, to serve as many children as possible. Don suggested that this seemed more fiscally responsible and fair to other children waiting for funding.

At the last SSAC meeting, the FSP Questionnaire was modified. Since then, they have been sent out and returned, and are currently being scored, using a new two-tiered scoring system. A “raw score” measures the child’s need. An “adjusted score,” which has been in effect in Waukesha County for years, will be used to encourage rotation of funding. The County is proposing that the adjusted score continue to determine *which* children receive funding, and the raw score will determine *amount of funds* awarded. The higher the raw score, the higher the funding. As with all other recent initiatives, this will allow the FSP program to serve more children. The discussion moved to cases in which the raw score may not be adequate for some high need kids. The county recognized that possibility and reserves the right to make administrative decisions to give more funding for high needs children. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Teri O’Grady asked about the parental co-pay. Jesse explained that the State requires such, now called the *Parental Payment Liability*. This matches the parental contribution for families whose child is in the CLTS waiver. In Waukesha County, this fee is based on funds actually expended for goods or services. Jesse explained that other counties calculate the Parental Payment Liability using the authorized funding, rather than actual funding.

Teri stated that they wait years to come up on the wait list, and now it will be difficult to be denied certain services/items. Mary Jo stated that the current economic downturn probably makes this as good a time as any to launch these changes in philosophies. FSP workers anticipate questions about these changes from parents who have been in program a long time. Don stated that he would like to have committee support so that the county can inform parents that the SSAC supports the changes being made. The committee agreed, but noted that it will be a difficult change for some families.

Discussion continued around the issue of what the county views as frivolous spending. Teri and Mary Jo both explained that they have asked for services/items that might be perceived as such. They explained that these items reflected needs that improved the

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quality of their and their child's life and. Mary Jo offered the example of purchasing a jogger. She now takes her child ice-skating. She explained that the jogger was not a "need," but an "enhancement" and it is still extremely useful.

Lorie explained that approved goods and services have to go back to outcomes. If there is an outcome, and the service/item will help meet that outcome, then it could be appropriate. Mary Jo stated that many other counties have lowered the amount of funding awarded across the board. Don reinforced that, stating that Racine County averages \$1500/child for those children receiving funding and pointing out that, if Waukesha did that, we could serve 100 more children. Don stated that goal is to serve 50 more children in 2009. To do that, we have to set parameters that provide better focus to the funding requests and limit purchases to items/services that are most important.

Jesse asked about funding for home modifications. Don explained home modifications could be done through waiver using one-time funding, but the family would have to agree in advance to voluntarily relinquish the waiver once the one-time funding request was met. State approval is needed for such use of the waiver, meaning that there is no guarantee that these would be approved. Don explained that the county has to come up with \$.40 on the dollar, so the county can't commit to the full ongoing waiver slot. The county board has mandated that no new spending or tax increases are allowed for waiver purposes. Jesse also said that now B-3 and Waiver are in the same division, it is easier to manage families with abuse and neglect. There has been the use of funding outside of waiver to meet the needs, but very few kids are in residential or treatment foster care. Don has more of an idea of which clients need the social workers for protection.

Don also explained that FSP could be used as local match funding. For 2009, we have set a goal to service 10 FSP kids in the waiver, using FSP as local match. We are identifying a list of children who have received repeated funding, on the assumption that those are high need children given that they receive funding multiple years even after the rotation that is built into the scoring system. Serving those children would satisfy the "no new funding" mandate because the child has already been receiving funding year after year. The waiver could serve their needs better while using no additional money. The left over FSP funding could be used for more children on the wait list. Mary Jo asked if the high needs children are in the waiver, and Don explained that the ones that we have identified are not. Teri stated that these plans make sense, but added that this will be a paradigm shift for parents. Mary Jo agreed that these plans creatively meet the needs of more children. Don explained the new challenge for Jesse is the work force issue. To accomplish the things that have been identified, we need additional staff.

Agenda item #6: OUTREACH

Tabled until next SSAC meeting.

Agenda item #7: Birth to Three Updates

Jesse discussed the new State computer system PPS (program participation system), which mandates counties to track federal outcomes and make referrals to school for

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transition planning. There has been discussion with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) about services already provided and now backing up data and converting cases. The State wants counties to back-enter closed cases, which is not possible. Waukesha county has agreed to use the new system from this point forward, but does not want to do duplicative work. Missy stated that approximately 40 hours of work would be needed to back enter data for last year on closed cases. LSS already lost \$70,000 in 2007. They cannot afford to do more work that will increase their loss. Missy and Jesse were seeking committee input about whether or not to do this work. What do parents think in terms of workload?

Mary Jo asked if the State is working to create an interface that eliminates the duplicate work or if the State is willing to do the work since they are mandating it. Missy stated that the State is aware of counties' perception that this burden is being transferred to the counties because State won't spend money. Some other counties are already doing this work. To date, Waukesha County is the only county refusing to do it.

Agenda #8: Future Meeting Dates

Don stated that it would be easier to schedule the meeting dates for the year so that everyone can plan their schedules more in advance. The hope is that such planning will increase attendance.

Next meeting dates:

April 23rd, 2009

July 23rd, 2009

Oct 22nd, 2009

We will plan on these dates unless a significant change is required.

Other agenda items: Don reported that Julie Turkoske is interested in looking for new co-chairperson. State required FSP reports will need to be reviewed by committee. Also, there is need to review the B-3 program improvement plan.

The SSAC meeting was adjourned at 2: 35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorie Johnston, CSW
Children with Special Needs Unit