



Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment
May 13, 2021, 10:00 AM
Virtual Meeting

1700 West Washington Street, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007

A general meeting of the Arizona Human Trafficking Council was convened on May 13, 2021 virtually, 1700 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (19)	Members Absent (6)
Angela Ducey, Co-Chair	James D. Molina
Kathryn A. Pidgeon, Co-Chair	Janet L. Garcia
Berisha Black	Kate Brophy McGee
Brad Snyder	Obed Escobar
Claire Louge	Torrie Taj
Colleen A. McNally	Warren H. Stewart
Darlene G. Newsom	
Jeffrey James Taylor	
Kathryn Ptak	
Katie J. O'Dell	
Leslie Y. Reprogle	
Lorrie G. Henderson	
Mark Upton	
Michael Faust	
Paul S. Mulligan	
Rachel Mitchell	
Richard D. Yarbough	
Terry M. Crist	
Zora Manjencich	
Staff and Guests Present (7)	
Maria Cristina Fuentes	Nora Briggs
Kim Brooks	Emily Horos
Vianney Careaga	Jack Trope
Kristin Sorensen	

Call to Order

- **Ms. Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, called the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. with 19 members and 7 staff and guests present. **Ms. Pidgeon** reviewed the procedures of how the remote meeting would be facilitated and welcomed all those present.

Opening Remarks

- **Mrs. Angela Ducey, Co-Chair**, welcomed Councilmembers to the Council meeting and introduced two new members of the Council: **Kathryn Ptak**, Executive Director of the Arizona Board of Executive Clemency, and **Claire Louge**, Executive Director at Prevent Child Abuse Arizona.

Roll Call

- **Ms. Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, conducted the roll call of the Council and took note of Councilmember proxies.

Approval of Minutes

- **Ms. Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, requested a review of the **March 18, 2021** meeting minutes.
 - **Kathryn Ptak** moved to accept the **March 18, 2021** minutes.
 - **Mark Upton** seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed with no dissenting votes at 10:10 a.m.

Special Recognition

- **Mrs. Ducey, Co-Chair**, publicly recognized **Emily Horos**, on behalf of the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment, for her efforts and passion to ensure the children entrusted to her care are raised in safe, stable, and nurturing homes in Arizona. **Ms. Horos** has only been licensed to provide foster care in Arizona since December 2019, but during this short time, she has proven to be an exceptional example of positive shared parenting. With each of the seven foster care children that have come into her home, she has supported communication with their biological families, sharing updates regarding the children, and assisting with transportation. Currently, **Ms. Horos** has three children in her home and continues to participate in positive shared parenting. She is a wonderful advocate for ensuring the children in her care have appropriate services in place, and she goes above and beyond to ensure that the biological parents understand the child's current conditions, services, and needs. The Council is appreciative of her hard work which continues to leave an impact and serve as an example of what one person can do to make a difference in the lives of many.
- **Ms. Horos** thanked **Mrs. Ducey** and the Council for the recognition.

Update from DCS

- **Ms. Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, introduced **Director Mike Faust** for an update from the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS). **Director Faust** began his presentation by highlighting the methods in which DCS works to achieve permanency in the lives of children in their care: 1) reunification with the birth parents; 2) adoption by relative, foster parent, or non-relative that is certified by the courts; and 3) Title 8 Guardianship. In adoption, parental rights are either terminated or relinquished and the adoptive parents make all the legal and social decisions for a child. Adopted children qualify, based on their needs, for an adoption subsidy which is a federally funded program. Those children that qualify for the subsidy receive Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) coverage until they turn 18, receive their high school diploma, or GED, whichever occurs first, and in some circumstances up to the age of 22. An annual review is conducted on cases in the Adoption Subsidy Program. Title 8 Guardianship is considered to be permanent and is intended to last until the child is 18 years of age. Guardians have to reapply for AHCCCS medical coverage on a yearly basis. An annual review is also conducted on cases in the Guardianship Subsidy Program. There are 34,916 Arizona children in the Adoption Subsidy Program with an average of 150-200 new children being adopted each month. There are 2,890 children in the Guardianship Subsidy Program with an average of 50 new children finding permanency through Guardianship each month. To provide case

management and to support the families, DCS has 21 Subsidy Specialists and two Behavioral Health Support positions. **Director Faust** noted that the Adoption Subsidy Program is part of the Social Security Title 4-e Program and the Guardianship Subsidy Program is a completely state funded program. In the future, DCS intends to opt into the federal version of the program which will allow DCS to serve families with a larger subsidy amount. DCS is also in the process of developing a scope of work for post-permanency subsidy services with a goal to engage adoption and guardianship families in services through the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) System. The full presentation can be accessed here <https://goyff.az.gov/meeting/cfse/2021/05/13>.

- **Ms. Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, added that if a family adopts through the foster care system and they do have the subsidy agreement, they are also entitled to a one-time federal tax credit. This has helped incentivize families to adopt through the foster care system. She also clarified that a couple of years ago state statute was changed so that certain family member classifications, including step-parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and great-grandparents, did not need certification to adopt, but still needed to undergo the background check and home study. This helps these family members move through the system quicker than having to wait for an adoption certification. **Director Faust** thanked **Ms. Pidgeon** for those additional points. He further lauded the efforts of adoptive families in Arizona and emphasized the need to achieve more reunification throughout the state. One-fourth of DCS's overall budget goes to support adoption subsidies, which is over \$300 million a year.
- **Ms. Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, inquired if she heard correctly that there are only 21 specialists managing the cases for 34,916 children in the Adoption Subsidy Program. **Director Faust** responded by stating that yes that is the case. Over the years the caseload has increased and the department will continue to evaluate resource demands over the coming years.
- **Mrs. Ducey, Co-Chair**, inquired about the subsidy amount, specifically if the amount included funds/coverage for children with extra needs (e.g. learning disabilities). **Director Faust** responded by stating that there are certain needs the department supports, an example of a one-time non-recurring request would be for dental braces. DCS is committed to working with families to help children achieve permanency in their lives. One of the things DCS did last year was support a higher adoption subsidy rate for DDD-enrolled children. The department noticed that children that were DDD-enrolled were not achieving permanency through adoption because there was such a disparity between the adoption subsidy rate and what the families would receive as a child-development home through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). The department has helped 15 children achieve permanency through alleviating the fiscal barrier that this presented.
- **Leslie Reprogle** commented that a big part of the adoption subsidy program is the behavioral health coverage. She talked about her own experience using this coverage and how much of a help it has been to the care of her adopted child. It is also important to note that the annual review can also help as the needs of the adopted child increase over time. **Director Faust** thanked **Ms. Reprogle** for her comments.
- **Katie O'Dell** inquired whether the reimbursement for adoptive families differs from that of kinship families. **Director Faust** responded by stating that the kinship families receive a different rate than adoptive families. **Ms. O'Dell** further inquired if kinship families are eligible for the long term subsidy. **Director Faust** responded by stating that yes they are.
- **Jeffrey Taylor** lauded the efforts of DCS under the leadership of **Governor Doug Ducey** and **Director Faust** over the years to move the needle in Arizona regarding the achievement of permanency through reunification. **Director Faust** greatly appreciated the comment and shared his own experience with finding permanency in his life. He further emphasized the importance of prevention and trauma-informed models to engage early in the life of children to keep families together as much as possible. DCS reunifies about 450 children a month with their families. He further added that this is something they have to continue to work hard on.
- **Director Faust** then provided some insight on the effects of the crisis at the Border on the child protection system in Arizona. He recently spent time in Douglas, AZ and Nogales, AZ to hear first-hand from DCS staff how they are navigating the influx of unaccompanied minors that entered without inspection into the United States. Around the same time, DCS was also involved in multiple engagements of unaccompanied minors in

Yavapai County and in the Tucson Sector [of U.S. Customs and Border Protection]. **Director Faust** noted that the child protection system in Arizona has been recently experiencing unique situations that have not been typical of other cyclical-influxes of unaccompanied minors that enter without inspection into the United States. He proceeded to provide some examples that have come to the attention of DCS that raise questions about legal jurisdiction, particularly when the state should intervene. The first example occurred two weeks ago and involved three unaccompanied minors, with ages between 12 and 15. These three minors were traveling in a caravan of 35 to 40 other minors when they were apprehended by authorities. Those three minors produced birth certificates and Social Security Cards, claimed to be U.S. Citizens, and claimed to have been living in a South American country for the last 10 years. This scenario presents the jurisdictional difficulty of who is to vet the documentation produced by the minors. Ultimately, those three minors were transitioned under the jurisdiction of DCS and now the department is working with their national consulates to understand and coordinate on next steps. The second example occurred last week and occurred in Yavapai County. A car was pulled over by the county sheriff in which six males fled from the vehicle while one female minor remained. While questioning the minor, it is discovered that she is a Guatemalan Citizen whose parents paid \$10,000 to a "coyote" to bring her across the border into the United States. She was on her way to California to get work so that she could send money back home to pay the balance of the trafficking arrangement. Since the minor was recovered by the county sheriff, this presents another jurisdictional difficulty between the county, state, and federal government. The third example involved a 10 year old minor in foster care. The minor is a U.S. Citizen and the mother is a U.S. Citizen residing in Sonora, Mexico. The mother used the minor to traffic drugs across the border and is now fleeing from an arrest warrant from drug trafficking. The minor was apprehended at the border and no charges were brought against them. Last month, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) apprehended about 17,000 unaccompanied minors.

- DCS is engaged with its federal partners, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), and CPB, to address issues relating to policy, procedure, jurisdiction, and humanitarian. HHS and ORR have put out more than \$800M in grant funding to support child welfare homes and congregate care facilities. The demand for foster homes to serve vulnerable children in Arizona continues to be real and remains high, regardless of pre, during, and post influx of unaccompanied minors. With the injection of those federal grants, there is now high-level competition in the marketplace to serve vulnerable children. The federal government has more funding and resources available than states do, and engages in what **Director Faust** shared concerns that with these resources they are able to draw more beds to serve unaccompanied minors that enter without inspection into the United States. He noted that DCS has already seen the transition of bedspace in the state and expects that number to grow. **Director Faust** stated that both issues are extremely important and emphasized the need for greater awareness on how decisions are made concerning the legal and humanitarian implications surrounding the crisis at the Border, especially its impact on the child protection system in Arizona.
- **Claire Louge** inquired as to how advocacy centers are being utilized to help address some of the circumstances that were mentioned. **Director Faust** responded by stating that he was not sure because the department is still trying to navigate some of the legal issues. He added that some advocacy centers have been utilized for forensic interviews to better understand the situations some of the youth find themselves in.

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

- **Mrs. Ducey, Co-Chair**, introduced **Nora Briggs**, Executive Director of The Dollywood Foundation, for a presentation on the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. **Ms. Briggs** began her presentation by providing background information on the Dollywood Foundation. The Dollywood Foundation was created by Dolly Parton in 1988 and inspired by her father. The mission of the foundation is "simply to inspire a love of books and reading." The flagship program of the foundation is the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The library is designed as a grassroots community-by-community book gifting program that mails high-quality, age-appropriate books to children from birth until age five, free to the family, no matter their income. Since starting in Tennessee in 1995, the Imagination Library has gifted more than 159 million books and 1.8 million children receive a book monthly in five countries. Because of the work the Imagination Library has

done, the foundation was awarded the Best Practice Award from the U.S. Library of Congress for addressing social barriers to literacy. The program model grants access to premium books at a fraction of market cost. Local partners are only responsible for at-cost book and mailing expenses for children registered in their coverage area. Printed and branded books are customized specifically for the Imagination Library, including title specific reading tips and the child's name printed on the label. Whether the invaluable time spent reading with a child, or the lifelong effects on early childhood literacy, the Imagination Library has a far reaching spectrum of impact from both the measurable to the immeasurable. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) studies provide evidence regarding how reading to children before Kindergarten (in a home literacy environment) positively influences the developing brain. Reading at home requires books, which is where the Imagination Library steps in. Building Early Literacy skills are important for success in school and create a bond with children that will last a lifetime. The Imagination Library is so much more than just books, it is an investment into a child's future. Children participating in the Imagination Library have significantly stronger reading skills and scored higher on reading achievement tests consistently from Kindergarten through Third Grade. In Arizona, 2.5% (10,819) of children aged zero to five were enrolled in the program with 39 affiliates across the state. A video featuring Dolly Parton was shared. The full presentation can be accessed here <https://goyff.az.gov/meeting/cfse/2021/05/13>.

- **Paul Mulligan** inquired if the Imagination Library can work with Head Start Programs at the state-wide level. **Ms. Briggs** responded by stating that yes, the Imagination Library also meets the Head Start Program requirements for the use of Title 1 funds.

Indian Child Welfare in Arizona

- **Ms. Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, introduced **Jack Trope**, Senior Director of Indian Child Welfare Programs at Casey Family Programs, for a presentation on Indian Child Welfare in Arizona. **Mr. Trope** began his presentation by providing background on the issues involving the removal of Native American children from their families. Early in American History, Native American children were often removed from their families, oftentimes uncooperatively, and sent to boarding schools. At these boarding schools, the Native American children were taught to conform with western society and many never saw their homes again. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs sponsored the Indian Adoption Project. Under this program, Native American children were adopted typically to middle class families. Most of the Native American children in this program were not abused and neglected, rather many came out of situations of poverty and the program was thought to improve their lives. There were studies conducted on state child-welfare systems by the Association on American Indian Affairs in the 1960s and 1970s that found that about 25%-35% of Native Americans lived in out of home placements and that 90% of those placements were in non-Native placements. Congress eventually passed Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA). The core of ICWA is to recognize tribal sovereignty and the important role tribes have in protecting the well-being of tribal children. This was in direct response to problems in state child-welfare systems and curtailed, but did not eliminate, state authority. ICWA adds federal standards to state child-welfare law, but does not replace state law, except where state law is inconsistent with ICWA. ICWA principles aim to be a gold standard for child welfare: keep children with their family, when that is not possible this means keeping children with their relatives, and keeping them connected with their culture and community. In Arizona, Pima County has the only ICWA Court operating in the state. This court works primarily with the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and Tohono O'odham Nation. These courts have a centralized ICWA docket and trained judges, attorneys, and social workers in the spirit and letter of law. There are about 15 ICWA Courts around the country. **Mr. Trope** concluded his presentation by sharing the impact the COVID-19 Pandemic has had on the ICWA process. The full presentation can be accessed here <https://goyff.az.gov/meeting/cfse/2021/05/13>.
- **Mrs. Ducey, Co-Chair**, inquired about the number of tribal foster homes and inquired whether the right of one biological parent is superseded by the other under ICWA. **Mr. Trope** responded by stating that there is a shortage of tribal foster homes in all states which has generated an emphasis on extended family placements. In regards to the second inquiry, ICWA is triggered based on the status of the child. A non-Native parent has the same rights as the Native parent.

Reunification Day

- **Mrs. Ducey, Co-Chair**, introduced **Judge Colleen McNally** for an update on the upcoming Reunification Day Event. **Judge McNally** began the presentation by stating that the event will be virtual this year. The Family Reunification Day event in Maricopa County will be held on June 12 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The virtual event will incorporate pre-event activities including professional portrait opportunities, gift bags, and certificates. For the virtual event, the Zoom Meeting link will be sent to all families involved and each family will be acknowledged. Maricopa County is honoring 25 families with 65 children for 2020 and 2021. **Judge McNally** thanked their partners, thanked **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** for serving as the master of ceremonies for the event this year, and played a video. The full presentation can be accessed here <https://goyff.az.gov/meeting/cfse/2021/05/13>.

Workgroup Updates

- **Mrs. Ducey, Co-Chair**, introduced **Claire Louge**, Chair of the Prevention Workgroup, for an update on the Workgroup. **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** provided an update on behalf of **Claire Louge**, who had another meeting to attend. The Workgroup will meet next on June 11 and looks forward to growing prevention collaborations across the state.
- **Mrs. Ducey, Co-Chair**, introduced **Katie O'Dell**, Chair of the Outreach Workgroup, for an update on the Workgroup. **Ms. O'Dell** had no new updates to report.
- **Mrs. Ducey, Co-Chair**, introduced **Rachel Mitchell**, Chair of the CJ Taskforce, for an update on the Taskforce. **Ms. Mitchell** updated the Council on the discussion among Taskforce members about the concerns surrounding Advocacy Care Centers. There are three more advocacy centers opening up in Surprise, Gilbert, and Tempe. However, there is a severe need for pediatricians and forensic interviewees due to the number of Advocacy Care Centers. The Taskforce recommends a regional approach to operating Advocacy Care Centers.

Upcoming Meeting

- **Ms. Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, reminded Councilmembers to mark their calendars for their next meeting on September 9, 2021.

Adjournment

- **Ms. Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, thanked everyone for being part of the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - **Paul Mulligan** moved to adjourn.
 - **Terry Crist** seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed with no dissenting votes and the meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Dated 13 of May 2021
Governor's Council Child Safety and Family Empowerment
Respectfully Submitted By:
Vianney M. Careaga
GOYFF