



Council on Child  
Safety and  
Family Empowerment

GOVERNOR DUCEY’S OFFICE OF YOUTH, FAITH AND FAMILY  
COUNCIL ON CHILD SAFETY AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

**Meeting Minutes DRAFT**

**March 14, 2019**

**10:00 AM**

**Governor’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**

**1700 West Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ 85007**

A general meeting of the Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment was convened on September 18, 2018 at the Governor’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 1700 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (16)	
<b>Angela Ducey</b> , Chair, First Lady of Arizona	
<b>Kathryn A. Pidgeon</b> , Co-Chair, Adoption Attorney	
<b>Andrea Stuart</b> , Executive V.P. Staff Services & Care, Arizona Baptist Children’s Association (on phone)	
<b>Berisha Black</b> , Director, Arizona Foster Care Initiatives	
<b>Colleen McNally</b> , Presiding Juvenile Court Judge Maricopa County, Retired	
<b>Greg McKay</b> , Director, AZ Department of Child Safety	
<b>James D. Molina</b> , Director, Step up Arizona	
<b>Jeffrey James Taylor</b> , Chair, Salvation Army Advisory Board	
<b>Molly Dunn</b> , Director, FosterEd Arizona	
<b>Obed Escobar</b> , Regional Director, Alliance Defending Freedom	
<b>Paul S. Mulligan</b> , President and CEO, Catholic Charities	
<b>Richard Yarbough</b> , Executive Director, Pilgrim Rest Foundation	
<b>Roy T. Dawson</b> , Director, Arizona Center for African American Resources	
<b>Torrie Taj</b> , CEO, Child Crisis Arizona	
<b>Zora Manjencich</b> , Assistant Chief Counsel, Attorney General	
<b>Kate Brophy McGee</b> , Arizona State Senator	
Members Absent (12)	Staff/Guest Present (12)
<b>George Michael Khalaf</b> , President, Data Orbital	<b>Maria Fuentes</b> , Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family
<b>Lorrie Henderson</b> , State Director, AZ 1.27	<b>Malcolm Hightower</b> , Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family
<b>Marcia Stanton</b> , Senior Injury Prevention Specialist, PCH	<b>Leona Morales</b> , Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family
<b>Leslie Y. Repogle</b> , Founder, Agape Adoption Agency Arizona (	<b>Livia Finman</b> , Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family
<b>Terry M. Crist</b> , Pastor, Hillsong Phoenix	<b>Victoria Gray</b> , Honoree
<b>Mark Upton</b> , President and CEO, Christian Family Care	<b>Spike</b> , Bikers Against Child Abuse
<b>Jay A. Cory</b> , President and CEO, Phoenix Rescue Mission	<b>Becky Ruffner</b> , Prevent Child Abuse Arizona
<b>Vicki Mayo</b> , Founder and CEO, The Touchpoint Solution	<b>Claire Louge</b> , Prevent Child Abuse Arizona
<b>Julie K. O’Dell</b> , Statewide Adoption Director, DCS	<b>Rose Phillips</b> , Southwest Human Development
<b>Katie O’Dell</b> , City Care Pastor, Hillsong Phoenix	<b>Ginger Sandweg</b> , First Things First
<b>Janet L. Garcia</b> , Arizona Senior Director, Casey Family Programs	<b>Michael Wisehart</b> , DES- Child Care Administration
<b>Warren H. Stewart Jr.</b> , Pastor, Church of the Remnant	<b>Bre Carpenter</b> , Fostering Advocates Arizona
	<b>Brian Steele</b> , Phoenix Dream Center
	<b>Robin Pearson</b> , CASA

## 1. Call to Order

Ms. Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair, called the Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment meeting to order at 10:16 AM with seventeen members present and eleven members absent.

## 2. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Pidgeon requested a motion to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2019 Council meeting. Mr. Greg McKay moved to approve the minutes as drafted and Ms. Berisha Black seconded. The motion passed with unanimous vote.

## 3. Special Recognition

Mrs. Angela Ducey, Co-Chair recognized community member, Victoria Gray her dedication to helping kinship families become licensed foster parents. Mrs. Ducey highlighted her accomplishments and presented her with a certificate of appreciation.

## 4. Fostering Advocates Arizona

Mrs. Pidgeon introduced Bre and Ashley, both representing Fostering Advocates Arizona (FAAZ). Bre is a student at Arizona State University and Ashley is a graduate of the University of Arizona. Both represent the FAAZ Young Adult Leadership Board and share their experiences in foster care and how the council can better help teens and young adults in the foster care system. Their focus is on making change through public policy. Most recently, the group has been able to advocate for a tuition waiver (more than 200 have participated so far) for youth wanting to attend any of the three state universities, health insurance through AHCCCS for those transitioning young adults (up 400% in enrollment), identifying a support for Normalcy and ongoing trainings (more than 5,000 Arizonans) to help support these youth. They stated that more than 900 young adults age out of the foster care system without gaining legal permanency. Studies have shown that you are more successful when they opt-in to the extended care support program. Five benefits to extended care include: Support, Education, Finances, Employment, and Community. Both suggested that there be an increase in DCS Case Specialists' accessibility and expertise with the youth and also allow the youth to evolve and grow. This is especially important for those youth living in group homes. Both said that there is a dire need for expanding available housing options, raising the independent living subsidy payment and adjusting re-entry. They had two specific asks of the council in helping with their advocacy. They asked that the youth have access to their personal documents (birth certificate, social security card, etc.), which would help them gain employment and a driver's license. They also asked the council for help with getting credit for the completion of courses from one school to another. Currently, students who have to transfer schools, specifically in K-12, have no guarantees that the work that they have completed would transfer from one school to another. Bre and Ashley thanked Mr. McKay and Sen. Kate Brophy-McGee for their continued support.

- Mrs. Ducey commended the group for being tremendous advocates and appreciates them greatly for the work that they are doing each day. She said they are a true testament to resiliency.
- Mrs. Ducey asked if, when they are 18 years old and go into extended care, are you still considered to be an adult, or do you still have to work with a case manager.
  - They responded by saying that they would have an independent living specialist as their main point-of-contact.
- Mrs. Ducey followed-up by asking if they are able to make their own doctor appointments on their own, or do they have to rely on others to do it for them.
  - They responded by saying that youth experience some limitations on living independently, including limited access to transportation and insurance. They said simple tasks like making an appointment and finding a way to get there, can be the biggest barriers.
- Mrs. Pidgeon asked if the group had any advocates including attorneys, a court-appointed guardian or even a CASA to help them through the process.

- They responded by saying that Ashley did have an attorney and guardian. She said that when you turn 18, you lead a meeting with your team. The team gives their recommendations on what the next steps will be for continuing in the extended care option. She said that she decided to stay in care. Her team also included her DCS case manager, her foster parents and independent living specialist.
- Mrs. Pidgeon asked about the law for foster children getting a driver's license.
  - They responded by saying that you need a parent or guardian to sign-off on you being able to get your license. Those living in a group home may not have someone who will do that. Youth also do not have access to their identification cards, birth certificates and social security cards. This also makes getting a license more difficult.
- Mr. Roy Dawson asked if they had any data collected for those who are in kinship care vs. living in a group home and attend college.
  - Ms. Molly Dunn responded that there is data from California on college experiences based on placement. Youth living in kinship care did the best academically. Graduation rates were still low, but higher than those living in foster care or a group home. Test scores, attendance and GPAs are also better.
- Mrs. Ducey asked about partially-earned credits when the youth are transferring from one school to another.
  - Another group member named Maria spoke about her own experience of attending 8 different schools in just two years. She ultimately attended an online charter school to finish her studies and graduate on time.
  - Ms. Dunn added that Arizona does not have a Partial Credit Law. We have a process where students can show proficiency, but the option is under-utilized and many are not aware of it. She cautioned against students attending non-traditional charter schools with blended learning experiences. She said that youth can end up pushed into alternative programs when they really want and need the typical learning experience for Normalcy.
- Mr. James Molina asked where he could find outcome data.
  - Ms. Black said that Los Angeles County has policies on partial credits and urged them to look into it.
- Mr. McKay thanked the group for their partnership with DCS and commended them for the work that they have been doing. He said that they are "phenomenal people" and the "sky is the limit for them."

##### **5. Healthy Families Arizona Home Visiting Program**

Mrs. Ducey introduced Ms. Becky Ruffner, is the founder and executive director of Prevent Child Abuse Arizona, one of 50 state chapters of Prevent Child Abuse America. Under her leadership, PCA Arizona now serves more than 60,000 children, families and community professionals annually. She first thanked Mrs. Ducey for compiling this council and for the work that they do. She said that they focus their work on nurturing the parents so they can, in turn, nurture their children. Most of the mothers that they work with are unemployed, but within a year, saw an increase in employment and an increased number of them sought a higher degree. They talk about setting goals based on the family's needs and how to achieve them. For those interviewed at the hospital upon giving birth, Between 65% and 80% were abused as children. Most would be going home alone without someone to help take care of the new baby. Ruffner said that research in Arizona has contributed significantly to guiding informed practice for nearly three decades. Last year, 4,000 families participated in the program with an average participation of 24 months or greater. Admission to the program is on a rolling basis. Ruffner said that 28% of children in AZ live in poverty. She added that 52% of births are paid by ACHSSS. With a focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), five of those are forms of child neglect. Experiences in the first few months of life disrupt brain development. She added that neglect is life threatening.

- Mrs. Ducey asked what is the primary way the families become part of the Health Families Program.
  - Ms. Ruffner said that they connect with them through prenatal clinics, physicians, WIC, and anywhere they seek services. OF those who they spoke with in the hospitals, 95% are enrolled in the at-home service.

#### **6. Supporting Resilience for the Very Young: Building a Trauma-Informed System of Child Care in AZ**

Mrs. Pigeon introduced Rose Phillips, Ginger Sandweg and Michael Wisehart. Rose Phillips is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with advanced training in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. She is an Assistant Director of the Services to Children with Disabilities department at Southwest Human Development. Ginger Sandweg is the Senior Director of Early Learning at First Things First. She has experienced multiple roles in the early childhood field such as preschool teacher, center director/manager, policy and program development, and college instructor. Michael Wisehart is the Assistant Director to the Division of Employment & Rehabilitation Services at the Arizona Department of Economic Security. He also oversees the Child Care Administration, in addition to many other programs. Ms. Phillips spoke about the trauma that is experienced in early childhood. The need for children to have a safe child care option is high, but the need for them to be in a quality care option is event greater. She said that 60% of the children in DCS custody are placed in just 5% of the available childcare centers in Maricopa County. Only 37% of children in DCS custody are in Quality-rated childcare centers. The group is recommending that the funding for the DES child care subsidy program be increased for 2020. This would increase the rate from \$365 to \$438 per month. This also would increase the DCS child care subsidy from \$406 to \$470 per month. For reimbursements are currently based off of a Market Rate Survey conducted in 2000. The group thanked Gov. Ducey for his work to help get the rates to a more recent and affordable place for families. They said that families need assistance. They are eligible for the program, but still cannot afford the gap between the reimbursement and what child care costs they are seeing. Many are choosing an alternative that is not ideal.

- Mr. Dawson asked about outcome data and First Things First funding servicing unlicensed child care providers.
  - Mr. Wisehart said that they have data that shows where the child care deserts are and where we are lacking quality child care in Arizona
- Mrs. Ducey thanked the group for being here today and said that Ms. Vicki Mayo is on the Prevention subcommittee and is actively reaching out to partners to break those barriers with the faith communities and other providers. She added that it is staggering to see the number of expulsions and only came to light a couple of years ago.

#### **7. Update on Recent and Upcoming Events**

Mrs. Ducey introduced Director Maria Cristina Fuentes of the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family. Director Fuentes spoke of the support for the Prevent Child Abuse Conference, along with upcoming events at GOYFF, including an event focused on sexual assault prevention, several faith-based roundtables and symposium. She reminded the Council that the AZ Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention Grant will close next week.

#### **8. Subcommittee Reports**

##### **Partnerships Subcommittee**

Ms. Garcia, Subcommittee Chair, was not in attendance

##### **Outreach Subcommittee**

Ms. Katie O'Dell, Subcommittee Chair, was not in attendance.

##### **African American Children and Families Subcommittee**

Mr. Roy Dawson, Subcommittee Chair, spoke about an upcoming focus group scheduled for March 21 at the First Pentecostal Church from 6:30- 8 p.m. and is sponsored by the Arizona Center for African American Children and the ASU Center for Child Well-Being.

**Prevention Subcommittee**

Ms. Vicki Mayo, Subcommittee Chair, was not in attendance

**Support Subcommittee**

Ms. Black, Subcommittee Chair, reported that the ACEs support group pilot meeting will be held next Tuesday, March 21.

**9. Call to the Public**

Mrs. Ducey conducted a call to the public. There were no requests to speak by the public.

**10. Future Meeting Dates and Adjournment**

Ms. Pidgeon noted the following meeting dates:

- May 7, 2019 (changed from May 9)
- September 12, 2019
- November 14, 2019

Mrs. Ducey requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Torrie Taj motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Molina. The meeting adjourned at 12:03 PM.

DRAFT