

CT CFSC Family Needs Sub-Committee
06/18/10 meeting notes

Committee members present: In person at DDS offices in New Haven, April Dipollina, Lisa Sheppard, Chris Sloss, Cathy Adamczyk. On the phone - Kathleen Bradley.

The notes/ minutes from the last meeting were corrected.

April opened the meeting by reading parts of the minutes and purposed responsibilities of the CT FSC. The group decided that this list was not what the committee needed to work on.

The discussion was moved back to the needs that were identified at the last meeting.

Lisa Sheppard, asked what the issues were with the family that Rosa Delora had had been concerned about. Cathy Adamczyk said the family had hired an "Advocate" for about \$200.00 an hour, the outcome had been unsatisfactory and they then had to hire a lawyer. This caused financial stress that, lead the family to go bankrupt.

Affordable accessible housing:-open discussion:

Lisa stated that depending where a families lives section 8 allowances may not be enough for a family secure housing. Even more troubling is the fact that many towns and cities have a waitlist for affordable accessible housing. The question was raised: what agency is responsible for Section 8 and housing subsidy? HUD was identified as the Federal Agency that is in charge of the funds for Section 8. Eveleen shared a story of a family that lived on the 3rd floor and after getting the local legislators involved the family was able to move to the 1st floor.

- Committee suggestion for CT FSC: The CT FSC should have a speaker come and give a presentation on Hud, Sec 8, and rent subsidy.
- Committee suggestion for CT FSC: The CT FSC needs to have an ongoing relationship with the agency in CT that provides housing subsidy. The CT FSC needs to know what is available and how families can access it.

Cathy A. stated that there was a resource guide created 3 years ago by a 25 agencies/providers collaborative. Cathy will try and locate a copy.

Eligibility for services from DDS & DCF Voluntary Services-

DCF voluntary services- Lisa Shepard said that she has found that people with Autism have been denied services even though they should be eligible because of a dual diagnosis. Kathy Bradley said that she would resend the DCF policy with regards to Autism. Open discussions followed. The issue seems to be that that there are discrepancies in the way that the policy is interoperated in different area offices. Kathy B. Suggested that when that occurs the ombudsperson should be called.

- Committee suggestion for CT FSC: Push to have the DCF Eligibility Policy Interoperated the same in each area office and stop misinformation so that decisions are not made incorrectly

Special Education Law/ PPT- Open discussion underscored the fact that there are many, many parts to this subject. The discussion focused again on advocates. Types of advocates that were identified were, self advocates, paid advocates, support persons, students advocates and parent advocates. Some points highlighted by Eveleen M. and Lisa S: the educators all have to work within a framework, most of the educational professionals want to help and do the best for the child, the parent or child are the only ones who do not have to answer to a boss, because of that the parent and or child can be the most effective advocate if given the right tools. Lisa Sheppard suggested the Special Education book "Building Bridges" as a very good tool and can be found on the SERC website. Eveleen said that there was a bill passed to create a task force to look at / rewrite the IEP. Eveleen will try to find and e-mail the bill #.

- Committee suggestion for CT FSC: The CT FSC should be represented on this task force or recommend a parent representative.

Lisa talked about the difference between an advocate paid or unpaid, who is at a PPT speaking / representing a student or parent, and a support person / advocate, who is at a PPT to give emotional support, coaching, help interpreter for the family and the educators. There is no regulating of any kind for paid advocates or for the amount of fees that an attorney can charge a parent or student.

- Committee suggestion for CT FSC: Ask for legislation to regulate the fees that an attorney would be allowed to charge.
- Committee suggestion for CT FSC: Form a sub committee that would keep The CT FSC informed on special ed law.

This committee will report to the CT FSC at the next meeting on July 8th

The next meeting for this committee will be July 12 in New Haven if the room is available. April will find out and e-mail everyone.

Respectfully submitted,
April Dipollina