

**Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)**  
**March 12, 2024, Meeting**  
**Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Elizabeth Simon  
Laura Brown, Technical Advisor  
Laura Coyle  
Stacey McNeely, 2024-2025 chair  
Kenneth Beale  
Ronald Whalen  
Tinu Akinshola  
Lisa Merken, CWS Administrator

**Welcome**

Ms. McNeely called the meeting to order.

**Review and Approval of the Minutes**

The draft minutes of the February 13, 2024, meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Tinu Akinshola made a motion to approve the minutes, Ronald Whalen seconded the motion, the committee voted and the motion was approved.

**Agency Update**

**Data**

Ms. Lisa Merkin reviewed the agency's data February 2024.

FY24 Data Review									
Data Element: Screening & Assessment	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Total
Number of Calls to Screening Unit	546	698	950	1,194	1,032	902	924	1,153	<b>7,399</b>
Reports of Child Maltreatment (Referrals)	438	473	678	790	731	648	693	830	<b>5,281</b>
Number of New Alternative Response (AR) cases	45	44	72	75	89	56	70	90	<b>541</b>
Number of New Investigation Response (IR) cases	49	50	61	83	65	51	64	64	<b>487</b>
New Non-CPS Cases	63	66	63	81	75	68	57	66	<b>539</b>
Number of Completed IR CPS investigation Findings- Indicated	50	37	32	44	44	35	47	32	<b>321</b>
Number of Completed IR CPS Investigation Findings -Unsubstantiated	28	18	20	31	20	22	25	32	<b>196</b>
Number of Completed IR CPS Investigation Findings - Ruled Out	41	23	16	30	50	31	40	48	<b>279</b>
Data Element: Foster Care Entries & Exits	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Total
Number of OOH care entries	6	7	9	7	6	14	13	9	<b>71</b>
Total children who exited OOH care	12	4	12	13	14	6	5	8	<b>74</b>
Total children in OOH care at month's end	331	334	331	325	317	325	333	334	<b>329</b>
Data Element: Out of Home	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Avg / month
Number of children in foster care	214	210	214	209	208	218	219	226	<b>215</b>
Number of children placed with relatives	70	71	69	68	60	58	65	63	<b>66</b>
Number of children in residential placement	47	53	48	48	49	49	49	45	<b>49</b>
Average length of stay for children in foster care (months)	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	<b>34</b>
Median length of stay for children in foster care (months)	27	27	26	27	28	28	28	26	<b>27</b>
Data Element: Resource Homes	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Total
Number of Licensed Regular Foster Homes (does not include Restricted/Relative Homes)	126	125	125	124	122	122	122	122	<b>124</b>
Number of Newly Assigned Regular Home Studies	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	<b>1</b>
Number of Recruitment Inquiries	37	32	54	34	33	32	27	36	<b>285</b>

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## Grief and Loss

Ms. Merken reported on a training by Families Connected for foster parents dealing with grief and loss in Timonium, Maryland, which received excellent feedback from three staff and about twelve foster parents. They were concerned, however, that the training may

be too lengthy for many resource parents to attend. The panel watched a video “Tending to Grief: A Look at the Outsized Presence in Foster Care.” Several on the panel remarked that the video focused on an important contradiction, that foster parents are asked to make strong attachments with the understanding that the attachment is not meant to last. This is not normal, and it is therefore not surprising that grief is a result. It should be helpful to prepare foster parents and their families in advance.

## **MCCRP Committee Business**

### Resource Home Recruitment and Retention Sub-Panels Updates

#### 1) Helping Resource Families to Deal with Grief and Loss at Reunification

Subcommittee work is complete. Ms. Laura Coyle will submit the spreadsheet and related documents to Lisa Merkin for staff use. Ms. Merkin mentioned the possibility that continuing education credits might be earned by watching video or engaging with other resources.

#### 2) Targeting Untapped Communities and Strategies for Emergency Placement Homes

Ms. Laura Brown sent list to Ms. Merkin. The Sub-panel may have some to add. The Sub-panels stopped reaching out to groups because groups prefer to be approached by agency officials. Ms. Merkin’s team will follow up on the leads.

### New Panel focus possibilities raised in February

- 1) Resources for foster parents for children with special needs
- 2) Support for agency staff
- 3) Support for transferring youth

### State Priorities

- 1) The state may end “aging out.” Legislation is pending.
- 2) The state may try to increase kinship placement. Ms. Merkin will investigate evidence-based practice models for the panel, and described the efforts made to locate family for foster placement and other support. Compensation is the same for all foster parents.

### Support for Agency Staff

- 1) Looking for ideas in addition to pizza lunch.
- 2) Recognition can happen any time.

### Discussion about focus possibilities

- 1) Panel asked Ms. Merkin what would be most helpful for the agency. This will depend on new legislation, may be passed by summer 2024.
- 2) Panel should consider what is in the charter. With respect to legislation, to be aware of what is expected and to observe and report on how the agency follows through.

Reminder to do Training

Spring Forum: “Exploring Pathways to Recovery from Mental Health and/or Substance Use” DHHS Thursday, May 9, 6 – 8pm on Zoom  
Contact Stacey Neeley for flyer and information about assisting Diane Lininger with the forum.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Meeting: **Tuesday, April 9, 7pm**