



OCS

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

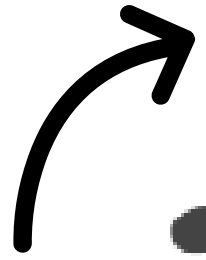
LINDSAY BOTHE CULVERHOUSE, LMSW

ANJC CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2023



- Program design and implementation
- Federal CFSR
- Leadership coaching
- Expert Witness
- CQI/Data analysis
- Facilitation - coalitions, workgroups



- Ethics Chair, NASW-AK Chapter
- Vice President & Chair of Greenspace Equity Collaborative, Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will learn about OCS' new initiative to create a Parent Advisory Committee for those with lived experience as parents involved in the child welfare system.
2. Participants will be able to identify four levels of impact that a successful Parent Advisory Committee may have.
3. Participants will engage in a brainstorm session about what works in recruitment of Alaska Native parents and how OCS can support Alaska Native parents who join the PAC.

QUICK POLL



QUICK POLL

Have you ever been personally involved in a
Parent Advisory Committee?

QUICK POLL

Temperature check

How are you currently feeling about OCS starting a Parent Advisory Committee?

TERMINOLOGY

- **Advisory Committee:** a formal structure for a group of people to share their perspectives and provide recommendations to the leadership of an organization.
- **Lived Experience:** those directly affected by the issue and the strategies to address that issue.
 - Lived Experience vs. Lived Expert

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE OCS PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

Those with lived experience as parents involved in the child welfare system (e.g. have been investigated or their children removed).

Under consideration: up to 10% of the Committee being parents living in Alaska without lived experience going through the child welfare system.

WHY HAVE A PARENT ADVISORY BOARD?

Parents Lacked Power to Influence the Process

"I personally hate the system because I don't think the agency does much good. The people... Are kind of on a power surge and feel they have the right and liberty to remove your children."

- **Parents noted that the workers have unchecked power over them**
- **They felt like – and sometimes were told – that they did not have any rights or opportunity for input**

"[The social worker] made pretty clear that I really didn't have any rights at the time. 'If you don't agree to voluntary sign over custody to her father, your rights will be terminated'."

"I remember there was one part of the case where the caseworker said, 'Your daughter is in a bubble and one pin prick and the bubble pops, and we can remove her from you'."

"Even when you are doing the right thing, they hold all the power. Who is going to believe the drug addict. They already made it apparent they wouldn't trust me. These people could do whatever they wanted..."

"I never felt like I had a voice...I was flat out told, 'This is what you will do, or we will take them'."

To Improve the System

Parents recommended better treatment, more transparency, greater effort to understand parents' circumstances and more access to preventive services



Parent mentors to support and advocate for families during the process

Parent advisory groups to inform policy and process improvements

Social worker training on topics related to trauma, parental engagement, cultural competence, mental health and substance use

"I would like to see more cultural competency and communication. In an ideal world, allowing a man to be vulnerable, having a treatment plan for both parents, having intervention in place before a removal."

"They should come and explain what the expectations are and the timelines. At least give you some kind of map – this is how it would go, whether right or left – a map. If cases set up from the get-go with transparency, there would be a lot less friction between parents and caseworkers."

"If it could be a more honest system and say, 'Hey, they are really struggling. What can we do to help them?' Not traumatize them or make them feel like the scum of the earth. Help them with a vehicle and a place to live."

BENEFITS

System: Best practices, new and innovative thinking to old problems

Reduce disproportionality?

Agency:

Fix agency blind spots & facilitate a deeper understanding of issues commonly faced by parents, develop solutions, and identify unintended consequences = Improved quality of services and programs and improved organizational outcomes

Staff:

Deeper understanding of parents and their needs = increased staff competency

Parents:
Engaged in change =
empowering experience.

Leadership
Development

DISPROPORTIONALITY: The overrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group in the child welfare system

Race	Percentage of Alaskans	Percentage of children in out-of-home care	Overrepresentation in CPS?
White/Caucasian	64%	42%	No
Alaska Native/American Indian	16%	70%	Yes, significant
Asian	7%	4%	No
Black/African American	4%	9%	Yes
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2%	5%	Yes

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY

- Disproportionate and disparate needs of children of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, particularly due to higher rates of poverty
- Racial bias and discrimination exhibited by individuals (e.g. caseworkers, mandated reporters)
- Child welfare system factors (e.g. lack of resources for families of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, caseworker characteristics)
- Geographic context, such as the region, State, or neighborhood
- Policy and legislation (e.g., lack of measures targeting the needs of children of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds)
- Structural racism (e.g., historical policies and cultural dynamics)

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021). *Child welfare practice to address racial disproportionality and disparity*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/racial-disproportionality/>

Building an Equity Driven Parent Leadership/Partnership System

<i>Message¹</i>	INFORMATION <i>"We will keep you informed"</i>	PARTICIPATION <i>"We care about what you think"</i>	ENGAGEMENT <i>"You are teaching us and we are thinking differently"</i>	PARTNERSHIP <i>"Your expertise is critical to how we address this issue"</i>	OWNERSHIP <i>"It is time to give the parents the power to provide transformative solutions"</i>
System Goal	Parents are Provided with Relevant Information	Parent Input Supports Decision-Making	Parent Identified Strengths and Challenges are Integrated into Process	Parents are Co-Designers in Planning, Decision-Making, Implementation, and Evaluation Efforts	Parent Centered Planning for System Change
Parents Experience	System Providing One-Way Information Newsletters/Brochures Events/Fairs Social Media Presentations/Videos	System Initiating Learning from Parents Surveys Focus Groups Interviews	System Initiating Two-Way Communications Authentically Engaged Steering Committees Advisory Bodies	System Committed to a shift in Culture Trust Belonging Authenticity Transparency	System Needs Changed Authentis Parent Coalitions Parents as Change Agents Parents as Innovators
Parents Goal	Parents Learn about Information and Resources for their Family	Parents Share their Opinions and Hope for Change	Parents Share their Voice and Help Make Programs and Services Better for Other Families	Parents Develop Skills and Knowledge from being a Team Member where "Together We Are Better"	"Nothing About Me Without Me" Parents Demand the System Honor Parent Expertise

COMMON STRUCTURE

AGENCY
STAFF PERSON
(OCS)

LIASION
AGENCY
STAFF

PARENT
LEADER 1

PARENT
LEADER 2

PARENT
LEADER 3

PARENT
LEADER 4

PARENT
LEADER 5

PARENT
LEADER 6

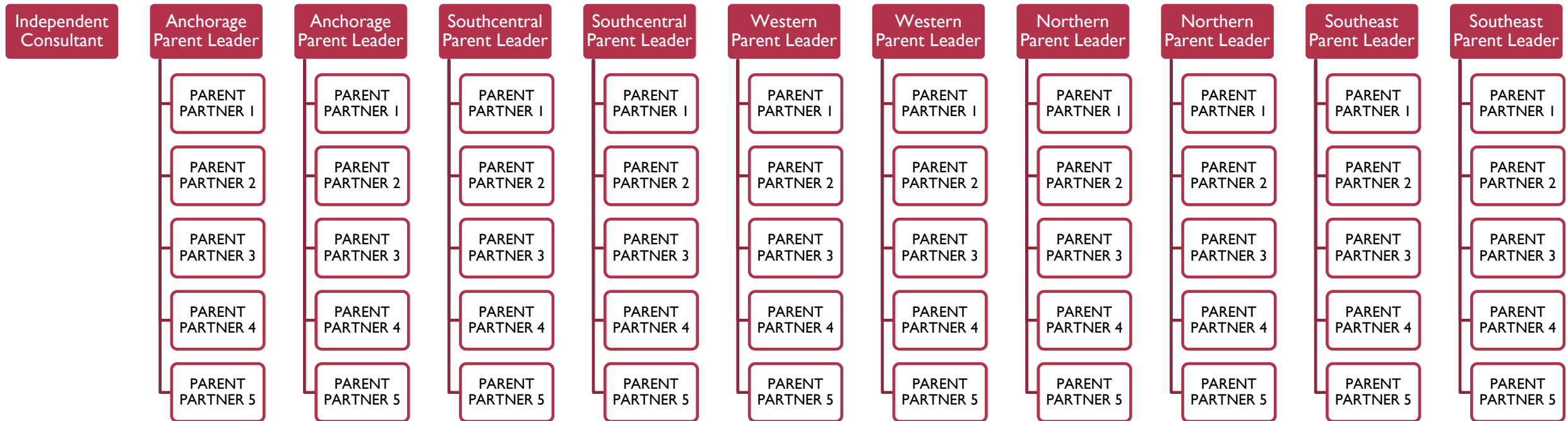
PARENT
LEADER 7

PARENT
LEADER 8

PARENT
LEADER 9

PARENT
LEADER 10

PAC STRUCTURE



BEST PRACTICES



PREPARATION

Dedicate the time to do this right

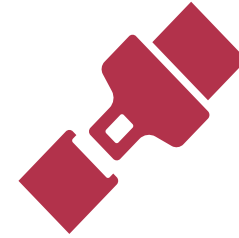
- Complete internal assessments of readiness and address barriers
- Train staff on expectations
 - Target knowledge, not stories
 - Don't tokenize
- Involve people from conceptualization through implementation and evaluation



RESOURCES

Dedicate sufficient resources

- Equitable compensation
- Support of dedicated staff
- Regular meetings at Director level AND lower level
- Resources needed to participate
- Ongoing training
 - Don't expect people to come in with professional training
- Encourage the time necessary for this process to happen effectively



SAFETY

Ensure safety

- Support lived experience consultants in emotions that come up through the work
- Ensure staff are trauma-informed
 - Make sure interactions are transformational versus transactional
- Feedback loop – need to let participants know how their feedback affected policy

Co-Design (6-9 months)



PAC officially starts! ~Sept 2024?

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE PAC BE SUCCESSFUL

- Spread the word
 - Feel free to distribute the flyer or my contact information!
- Share ideas or feedback with me and the Co-design Team
- Share leadership development training and opportunities



Join our Parent Advisory Committee and make a difference in child welfare

The Office of Children's Services (OCS) is recruiting parents for a Parent Advisory Committee that will partner with OCS to strengthen and improve services to children and families. Committee members will meet monthly to advise OCS based on the parent perspective, provide input into the agency decision making processes, and support the organization in meeting its goals.

OCS' Parent Advisory Committee is not yet created. For the first six months, parents who apply and are selected will be primarily advising on the creation of the Committee itself. This is a volunteer position and a stipend will be provided for attendance at meetings. Training will be provided.

Apply to be a part of the Parent Advisory Committee if you:

- ▷ Want to be involved in the creation of something new at OCS
- ▷ Are passionate about improving the child welfare system and have the time and ability to attend meetings
- ▷ Are a biological or adoptive parent
- ▷ Can effectively work with people of diverse backgrounds and experiences, including other parents and OCS staff
- ▷ Meet other eligibility requirements, including: at least one year since any issues with substances or criminal history, one year since an ongoing OCS case, and no current OCS investigations or involvement in lawsuits with the State of Alaska

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

– Helen Keller

For More Information or to Apply

Lindsay Bothe Culverhouse
907-444-9342 • lindsay@botheconsulting.com



QUESTIONS?

BRAINSTORM (6 Minutes)

Please visit each of the post-it notes around the room and add your ideas:

- Challenges OCS may face in recruiting Alaska Native parents
- Strategies that work in recruiting Alaska Native parents
- How can OCS support Alaska Native parents who join the PAC?

DISCUSSION

Challenges OCS may face in recruiting Alaska Native parents

DISCUSSION

Strategies that work in recruiting Alaska Native parents

DISCUSSION

How can OCS support Alaska Native parents on the Committee?

VOTE

Do you believe it's better to have one PAC or have two PACs, with one comprised entirely of Alaska Native parents?



For questions, ideas, or to get involved:

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