



Family Preservation Coalition Notes

Date & Time: 10-11am

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/96242203257?pwd=R2IKUTRGYndxYndOTSt2Ny9tWDU3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 962 4220 3257; Passcode: 790833; Audio Call-in Option: +1 646 931 3860

AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions

CLM Staff: Sue Anamier O'Callaghan; Tasmiah Ahmad

Members: Molly Titus, FRC Hyannis; Paula Young, Fall River Deaconess Support & Stabilization; Emma Tobin, Family Nurturing Center; Jacquelyn, Quincy FRC; Paula Young, Plummer Youth Promise; Sara Collins Newton, 18 Degrees; Sara Cameron, LUK

Policy Committee/Board Report Out (next steps & feedback)

- Charter
 - See attachment
- Family Preservation Coalition Recruitment – if you have staff you think should be joining us, you can send this:
 - We're reaching out to encourage CLM member staff interested in being active contributors as part of CLM's Family Preservation Coalition (FPC), which plans to meet 3-4x annually (next meeting is TBD). The function of the FPC is as a Steering Committee to the Policy Committee/Board. Members provide on-the-ground knowledge of direct supports and services with an eye for bigger picture challenges and avenues for solution-making. Please see the Strategic Plan/Charter attached for more information and let Sue@childrensleague.org know if you'd like to join us.
- Themes/issues (TBD at next Policy Committee meeting)

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:

ACTION: REACH OUT TO YOUR LEGISLATORS – let them know we want to see all these bills pass this session. You can let them know the bills below in green highlights have received Favorable Committee reports; those with blue highlights have extended deadlines. Reach out to the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities to favorably report out on the bills in blue.

Templates to speak to the bills still needing reports:

- <https://www.childrensleague.org/legislative-advocacy-outreach-templates/>

Legislators contact info.:

- Find your state legislator and their contact info [here](#) and compare it to the Committee Members' [list here](#). If your legislator is on the Committee, include your home city and zip code within your contact information to show your legislator you live in their district.

Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities Chairs:

- Robyn.Kennedy@masenate.gov; (617) 722-1544
- Jay.Livingstone@mahouse.gov; (617) 722-2011

KEY:

Blue highlights – Committee Deadlines Extended

Green highlights – Received Favorable Committee Reports

- **An Act to Eliminate Disproportionality and Inequities for At-Risk Children** [S.120](#) / [H.153](#) (Sen. Susan L. Moran; Rep. Paul J. Donato) Requires child-serving state agencies to report on disproportionality and inequity in services. [Fact Sheet](#).
 - Committee: Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities; Deadline: May 2
- **An Act Enhancing Child Welfare Protections (Child Welfare Omnibus)** [S.124](#) / [H.165](#) (Sen. Oliveira; Rep. Finn) Similar to the Child Welfare Omnibus bill of 2021-2022, such as to codify DCF's use of an education manager and enhance reporting requirements. It also adds a bill of rights for children in foster care, including to promote siblings' connections.
 - Committee: Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities; Deadline: May 2
- **An Act to Establish a Massachusetts Children's Cabinet** [S.79](#) / [H.189](#) (Sen. DiDomenico; Rep. Khan & Rep. Cabral) Promotes interdepartmental collaboration (with lots of government agencies) and program implementation and includes an advisory committee.
- **An Act relative to parentage to promote children's security** [S.947](#) / [H.1713](#) (Sen. Tarr; Rep. Khan & Rep. Scanlon) The Massachusetts Parentage Act (MPA) will update Massachusetts' outdated parentage law so that it is clear, equitable, and provides legal protection for all families, including LGBTQ+ families. [GLAD](#) is the lead on this bill. Here's a [Fact Sheet](#).
 - Committee: Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities; Deadline: May 2
- **An Act to Lift Kids Out of Deep Poverty** [S.75](#) / [H.144](#) (Sen. DiDomenico; Rep. Decker) Raises the amount of the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefit available to very low-income families. The bill sets a floor for financial assistance at 50% of the federal poverty level -- \$960 a month for a family of three in 2022. The bill also increases financial assistance by 20% a year until grants reach 50% of the federal poverty level. This bill is led by Lift Our Kids. [Fact Sheet](#).
- **An Act relative to language access and inclusion** [S.1990](#) / [H.3084](#) (Sen. DiDomenico; Rep. Madaro & Rep. González) Builds the capacity of key public-facing state agencies to meet the language access needs of an increasingly diverse population by standardizing and enforcing language access protocols and practices. This bill is led by the [Mass. Law Reform Institute](#), [Massachusetts Appleseed](#), and [Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition](#). [Fact Sheet](#).
- **An Act Providing Affordable and Accessible High Quality Early Education and Care to Promote Child Development and Well-being and Support the Economy in the Commonwealth** [S.301](#) / [H.489](#) (Sen. Lewis; Reps. Gordon & Rep. Madaro) Provides the specific structure that is needed to deliver affordable care options for families; significantly better pay and benefits for early educators; a new, stable source of funding for providers; high-quality programs and services for children; and substantial relief for businesses and our economy. This bill is led by the [Common Start Coalition](#). See more on this legislation/issue [here](#). [Fact Sheets: H489 & S301](#)
- **An Act increasing access to postpartum home visiting services** [S.672](#) / [H.985](#) (Sen. Lovely; Rep. Decker & Rep. Tyler) Calls for the Department of Public Health to establish and administer statewide programs providing universal postpartum home visiting services. Led by [CHAC](#) (Children's Health Access Coalition). See Health Care for All Massachusetts' [Fact Sheet](#).

BUDGET PRIORITIES:

Asks Different from Governor's Budget:

- \$27.3M for **Family Resource Centers** and an additional \$5M of flexible funding to deliver the myriad of critical, locally relevant, and ever-evolving programming for families with appropriate staffing and resources. As you know, FRCs support families with children requiring assistance, provide a variety of critical treatment services, deliver child abuse and prevention education, divert families from more intensive DCF involvement, and provide access to a wide variety of basic resources for housing, food, baby supplies, transportation, and emergency shelters. As the ongoing challenges of the migrant crisis continue and responses to unexpected crises are repeatedly endured, such as with COVID-19 and natural/man-made disasters that unexpectedly impact local communities, the added flexible funding is critical.
- 20% increase to **Temporary Assistance for Families with Dependent Children** and **Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children** (the current maximum cash assistance grants in our state are far below even half the federal poverty level known as Deep Poverty which hurts kids through health and emotional damage, housing instability, toxic stress, and impaired school performance; the Governor's budget would freeze TAFDC and EAEDC at the inadequate October 2022 levels).
 - Direct assistance is one of the strongest prevention tools in our child safety toolbox. Ensuring families can meet basic needs like housing, food security, health care, and childcare has proven time and again to be the keystone of child safety and well-being. Recent 9C cuts prevented the small but hard fought 10% increase to cash assistance grants that was supposed to take effect in April 2024. The Governor's budget proposal would freeze grants at October 2022 level for all of FY 25, which would be another kick to the most vulnerable in our state. Grants have lost 44% of their value since 1988 and lose more value every month as the cost of living goes up.
- **EA (Emergency Assistance) for Emergency Family Shelter** should be further supported by a coming supplemental budget, continued appeals for federal assistance, and reforms to the overburdened system.

Asks In Line with Governor's Budget:

- **Child and Family Welfare and Well Being**
 - \$139.5M for **Family Support and Stabilization** (up from \$88.8M in FY24)
 - \$3.1M in a new **Postpartum Care Services** program within DCF, serving families impacted by substance use disorder
- **Human Services Critical Workforce**
 - Understanding the fiscal realities of this budget cycle, CLM supports maintaining the Governor's proposal for line-item 1599-6903 to fund critical rate adjustments mandated by Chapter 257 of the Acts of 2008. We will be sharing more detailed information about Chapter 257 and the continuing need for adequate wages for these essential workers under separate cover as part The Collaborative, comprised of ABH, the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP), the Children's League of Massachusetts (CLM) and the Providers' Council.
- **Early Ed/Childcare**
 - Building up Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) **Pre-K Initiative** with \$21M investment up from \$5.5M to expand universal access to high-quality preschool
 - Creating a **Childcare Affordability** Initiative receiving a \$75M investment to serve an additional 4,000 children
 - \$150M for **Child Care Grants to Providers**
 - \$65M for **Early Education and Care** financial assistance rate increases
- **Behavioral Health**
 - \$10M increase to DMH's **children and adolescent mental health services**
 - \$3.6M to support DPH's **school-based behavioral health programming**

- \$5M for **early childhood mental health supports and services**

Member Input/Updates *(on-the-ground report out of issues to take to Policy Committee/Board)*

1. *What are some examples of services that FRCs provide outside of their contracted scope?*
2. *What funding sources are providers using to supplement FRC programming?*
3. *What are some opportunities for growth that FRCs would develop if additional funding were available?*
4. *How is the migrant crisis affecting FRCs and any others partners/providers?*

Major impact on FRCS: across the state

1. **So many families; not enough housing:** Increase from 10/31 arrivals which was 14 Haitian families with 44 individuals (variety of languages spoken); then many more families of Haitian descent in Pittsfield and Spanish speaking families without anything; strain on staff; housing crisis is extremely burdensome; new emergency shelter may be established in Pittsfield; additional funds provided to assist families in unsupported shelters but there are families who can't find space in the shelters – nowhere to put them; often going to overcrowded apartments, state forest, and cars with unsustainable arrangements; homeless prior who aren't migrant families are still in need too; some have funding for new clients experiencing homelessness (ex in Quincy helped family living in car have hotel 2-3 weeks while waiting on housing list but can't do it for all); need more funding – Family Welcome Center has changed guidelines; fams are still being sent to airport;
2. **Case Mgmt Needed OUTSIDE SCOPE of Contracts:** case mgmt (and they can't call it that) – family support workers with time consuming works; case mgmt – might take 2 workers to help a family (language, referrals, knowledge of programs, applications together); going into the community to meet with people bc they may have a hard time getting to their office and then they aren't there when someone else comes
 - a. Another reason for losing staff too; social workers want to say they did case mgmt but technically you're not supposed to be doing it even though they are
3. **Items families needed:** housing, sometimes buying warm clothing, sleeping bags; transportation cards too to get to the stores (eg spread out in Berkshires); diapers, warm food (Some families driving to the Cape to get diapers, food, clothing from South Shore)
4. **Other Family Needs:**
 - a. **Language translation** adds to the time and cost some of the work takes; have started ESL courses for some of the families
 - b. Want jobs but don't have authorization for that
5. **FRC Growth needs:**
 - a. additional positions – school liaison, family partner, family support worker
 - i. All staff paid for 37.5 hrs/wk but it's impossible with responsibilities (49 hours of work needed to fit – flexing staff time to try to make it work); family support workers taking the brunt of that
 1. Family support workers do the parenting classes (many in work plan that need to be run 2x or 4x per year which is challenging);
 - a. *More referrals needed too? Challenge to get DCF staff to refer parents there for parenting groups – they have challenge with overturn and new DCF staff have work plans they aren't referring out*
 - b. Want to pay more for retention (overworked with high expectations at FRCs) - higher rates or bonuses needed
 - c. More staff trainings? Less staff trainings being offered (orientations have been full)

6. **Outside Funding:** Dunkin Donuts grant helps with some grocery store gift cards; some MOUs for funding; looking at some grants;
7. **PARTNERS:**
 - a. CFCE (Community Family Coordinated Engagement Grant) – EEC grant to one agency in area (subgrant) for network of playgroups, developmental screenings, literacy activities, snacks/meals at times, sleep group, and mental health catches and referrals growing advocacy conversations (funding level for years); CFCEs aren't supposed to do case mgmt but that is too but have to call it other things; have good relationship with FRCs, e.g., embedded in HeadStart in Pittsfield
 - b. Parent Child Plus also funded through CFCE (nationwide home visiting for parents and childs – some CFCEs are that and Parent Child Plus); EEC couldn't use primary funds to serve temporary housing and it's supposed to be 23 wks long but then did get approval bc the temp housing is lasting so long
8. **Unaccompanied minors and refugees work in outside orgs:**
 - a. Plummer – refugees and unaccompanied minors has led to building family/connection work with identity and belonging for that experience and considerations of additional funding and services needed (ex. Youth has family in other state and want to build those connections); there national training and consulting team is getting more requests for work on unaccompanied minors too and they consider how do you find ppl and build loving, sustaining relationships over time
 - b. LUK – have had a group home for unaccompanied immigrant young adults/minors for awhile now. Not sure if the recent crisis impacted that or not

Next Meetings

- Next FPC Meeting: TBD
- **CLM State House Day: May 16, Hall of Flags (10am)**
 - Trainings during member forums in advance:
 - May 5/10: Hill Day Prep

Adjourned