

Team Based Parent Representation in Maricopa County

Team-Based Approach to
Parent Representation in
Dependency Cases: What it is
and how it can help



Today's Presentors

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Overview of Team Based Representation

- The Team Based Representation Program provides parents with a robust representation team to supply supports and resources in addition to legal representation. Our framework for successful outcomes relies on provision of support and ample services to address the underlying issues keeping the case open.

The Need for Team Based Representation

- Maricopa County
 - 7.2 million is the estimated population of Arizona in 2020
 - Maricopa County is the 4th most populous county in US (4.7 million)
 - Statewide: 12,546 children in out-of-home care as of June 30, 2022*
 - 40% of children in Arizona will come in contact with DCS**
 - Maricopa County has the highest termination rate of the top 20 populous counties in the United States**

* AZ DCS Semi Annual Report date September 30, 2022.

***Edwards, Wakefield, S., Healy, K., & Wildeman, C. (2021). Contact with Child Protective Services is pervasive but unequally distributed by race and ethnicity in large US counties. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS, 118(30), 1-. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2106272118>

The Parent's Team

Along with the Parent Rep attorneys, the TBPR program assigns either a social worker, a peer parent navigator, or both!

Social Workers

- Independent Contractors with county/In House with staffed offices
- About 20 social workers contracted/In house has 1 SW super and 4 SW per office
- Caseloads: varies
- Funding: Title 4E
- Almost all are former DCS case managers
- Contract attorneys decides which SW to assign/In house—SW workers are assigned
- Conflict check
- Confidentiality documents for contract SW

Peer Parent Navigators

- Family Involvement Center (FIC)
- 6 PPN
- Caseload: approx. 20-40
- Training: provided upon hire but ongoing training and support is provided by PPN lead and manager
- Funding: Primarily State Opioid Response Funds and other grant funding

How Are Social Workers Different from DCS Case Managers



- Biggest Difference:
 - There is confidentiality between social worker and parent. There is NO confidentiality between DCS Case manager and parent.
- The parent social worker is assisting the parent and the attorney with their case and are part of the defense team.
- A social worker in this program is not considered a mandatory reporter. Social workers are not providing services for treatment and therefore are not mandatory reporters.
 - “For non-lawyer assistances working in non-treatment capacities, lawyers must continue to take reasonable steps as required by ER 5.3 to maintain confidentiality pursuant to ER 1.6.”
- However, if a Social Worker testifies or submits a written report to the court, the confidential relationship is waived. The AAG cannot compel a parent Social Worker to testify.

Success Story

- Petition filed in January 2021
- Social Worker assigned February 2021 after services not timely put in place
- Social Worker provides resources for parenting classes and substance abuse treatment
- Social Worker coordinates with DCS Case Manager to increase communication with DCS and Father.
- DCS dismisses the case after full return in October 2021



Why The Program Works



- Team based approach provides non-DCS support to parents.
- Social Worker builds trust with the Parent.
- Parent understands they have a TEAM behind them.
- Parent feels empowered and supported.
- Social Workers act as a buffer between Parent and DCS. (In general, social workers can talk directly to case workers.)
- Social Workers can attend meetings with DCS, as well as CFTs, TDMS, Case Plan Staffings.
- When appropriate, social workers can provide service options outside of DCS contracts that have waitlists and delays
- Provides multiple outlets to help explain the process and take time with the parent to help them understand the reasoning behind services and goals.

How Can the Team Enhance Family Advocacy?

- Skills to work with clients in their most vulnerable state.
- Experience with victims of trauma.
- Best practice is to request the team at the beginning of the case. However, a team can be requested at any time during the case.
- Benefits are utilized no matter when the team starts working with the client.
- Rapport and trust building.
- Facilitate communication between parent and DCS.
- Attend court, CFTs, TDMs.
- Actively hold DCS and the client accountable.
- Liaison between parent, DCS, attorney and providers.
- Participate in meetings with service providers.
- Observe visitation.
- Ensure services and supports are in place in a timely manner.



Social Worker for Child as the Parent

- Parent Social Worker can help guide the minor through the “parent” side of DCS
- Help encourage “common sense” case management
- Preventing the minor from being overwhelmed in services.
- Understanding that the minor is still a child and will have some difficulties
- Providing Support and helping the minor “talk” to DCS.
- Independent Living Case Manager vs. Parent Case Manager

The ASU Study



Arizona State University Center for Child Wellbeing -March 2022

- Analyzed data provided by OPA that was collected between 10/2019 - 01/2022
- Included 178 cases that entered the program at all stages of dependency process
- 82.6% engaged in the program
- 73 cases had reached permanent outcome at time of study
- 53 or 72.6% resulted in reunification
- Other positive outcomes: SX but developed relationship with adoptive family, GX options.
- Statistics re: race, factors for removal were not documented properly therefore were not included in the analysis
- Parents were supported, voices heard

Award Winning Program



2022 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTIES

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
CELEBRATING 52 YEARS OF
COUNTY INNOVATION

- Maricopa County award for Team Based Representation Program.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Pre-dependency
- The program becomes standard practice
- A team for every family when they are at risk of child removal
- Establishing sustainable funding for Peer Parent Navigators
- More diverse teams in regards to race, life experience, economic background, age and genders.



Questions?

