

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-051

Creating an Interdepartmental Work Group on Children and Families in Foster Care.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a) Our future doctors, teachers, business owners and community leaders are all children currently learning and growing in our communities. Each of us has a responsibility to ensure they have what they need to grow up safe and healthy.
- b) All children deserve nurturing home environments, safe places to play, good medical care and stimulating schools. Children who experience secure, loving relationships and stimulating environments become confident, caring and contributing adults.
- c) The primary responsibility for children's health and wellbeing rests with parents, but parents need to be supported. All families benefit from strong, supportive neighborhoods and communities, where there are opportunities to ask for help. We each play a role in helping all children thrive.
- d) In Multnomah County, there were 2,813 incidents of abuse/neglect in 2009. 293 of these incidents were for sexual abuse and exploitation.
- e) Multnomah County has a higher placement rate of children in foster care than both the national rate and the rest of our State. More troubling, in Multnomah County African American children are twice as likely to be in foster care than are white children and Native American children and youth are 16.5 times more likely to be in foster care.
- f) Child abuse is an issue with serious long-term consequences for individuals, families and communities. Children who are abused suffer effects that often last a lifetime. The human cost is heartbreaking. The monetary cost of intervention in child abuse and neglect cases (conservatively estimated at \$258 million a day in the United States) places an enormous burden on our child protective services, educational, juvenile and mental health systems.
- g) To reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect we must do all we can to prevent abuse before it happens. The majority of child abuse cases stem from situations and conditions that are *entirely preventable* in an engaged and supportive community.
- h) Multnomah County Departments and staff are to be commended for their hard work to reduce child abuse and neglect in our community by providing important services and advocacy on behalf of children and their families. Multnomah County should continue to view child and family safety as a funding and policy priority, and help in creating a supportive community in order to prevent child abuse.
- i) The Department of Human Services District 2 and the Multnomah County Commission identified 67 separate programs across 5 County departments which serve the families of children or children in the foster care system and coordination between these 67 programs and DHS does not happen in a consistent and coordinated fashion.
- j) Better outcomes for children and families require better coordination and collaboration among all of the services and supports serving the needs of individual families and children.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

1. To create an interdepartmental workgroup represented by as many of the Departments and Divisions who provide services to children in foster care or the families of children in foster care. Representatives of the Department of Human Services will be invited to serve as partners in this workgroup and will study the scope of services currently provided to children and families served by DHS District 2, opportunities for collaboration, coordination and improved efficiencies that lead to better outcomes for children and families.
2. To charge the Commission on Children, Families & Community with supporting the interdepartmental workgroup under the leadership of a member of the Board of County Commissioners and to report to the Board before January 31, 2011.

ADOPTED this 29th day of April, 2010.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Jeff Cogen, County Chair

Deborah Kafoury,
Commissioner District 1

Barbara Willer,
Commissioner District 2

Judy Shiprack,
Commissioner District 3

Diane McKeel,
Commissioner District 4

SUBMITTED BY:
Commissioner Deborah Kafoury, District 1