Parent Advisory Group (PAG) Charter
Santa Clara County Department of Family & Children’s Services

I. Vision

DFCS believes that Parent Voice & expertise in decision-making is the key to having practice, policies and programs that support family’s strengths, needs and instills hope.

II. Purpose

The Parent Advisory Group (PAG) is a partnership between parents who have exited the Child Welfare System and the Santa Clara County Department of Family & Children’s Services (SCCDFCS) Agency Director and Staff. Parents provide voice, insight and work collaboratively to address barriers and create solutions that promote family permanency and well-being. The PAG meets the 4th Tuesday of every month to continuously inform how DFCS can best shape policies, practices, and initiatives.

III. Objectives

1. PAG members advise DFCS child welfare agency director regarding program, policies and initiatives, training and practice issues.
2. Provide input and guide the development of the PAG Work Plan and County California Child & Family Services Review System Improvement Plan (SIP) (every 5 years).
3. Guide the development and implementation of policies, practices, current/future contracts and initiatives that support family permanency and well-being.
4. Review and provide feedback on data, and sharing of results related to outcomes and national indicators

IV. Deliverables & Timetables

- See PAG Work Plan (Attachment 1)

V. Membership Criteria

The PAG will be open to all parents/caregivers who have formally exited the child welfare system regardless of reunification. Interested parents/caregivers wanting to join will need to complete a short application indicating their interest. Applications will be available online at https://www.sccgov.org/sites/ssa/dfcs/Pages/prevention.aspx. The PAG will have at minimum ten parents/caregiver in addition to DFCS staff as well as stakeholder agency participants. Members who cannot attend a meeting or wishing to withdraw from the PAG will notify the DFCS in advance. When necessary, the PAG may request specific DFCS staff or other stakeholder agency participants to present on topics, provide consultation and input regarding recommendations from the group.

Revised 11/19/2019
VI. Recruitment

Information concerning the PAG will be posted for the public on the DFCS county’s website. Recruitment for the PAG will be shared via word of mouth, with social workers and with community agencies that support families involved in child welfare as well as after their case is closed. In addition, information will be shared with Parent Advocates, Mentors in Drug Wellness Court or Family Court, Cultural Brokers and Multi-Cultural Community Team Members. PAG members may recruit via word of mouth. Recruitment will be in alignment with the previous section regarding Membership Criteria.

VII. Advisory Group Operating Guidelines

Communication & Structure of Meetings

- Meetings will be held on the 4th Tuesday of every month from 6 pm-7:30 pm. Extension of time, will require the consent of the majority of members attending that meeting. Consensus will be indicated with a show of hands.
- Meeting locations may vary due to location restraints, DFCS support staff will provide options and members will vote on best possible locations. Locations will need to include space for up to 16-20 people as well as child care.
- It is anticipated that there will be meetings each month or as otherwise agreed upon.
- PAG members will be informed of meetings through email at least two weeks prior to the meeting. PAG members will inform DFCS support staff regarding their attendance, translation and child care needs.
- The DFCS staff will keep a record of meeting attendees, key issues raised, and actions required. Comments from individual members and verbatim notes of the meeting will not be prepared to ensure anonymity.
- The previous meeting notes and a meeting agenda will be forwarded to members of the PAG at least one week before the next meeting. Any changes to the notes can be addressed at the following meeting.
- Meetings are conducted in English, however translation will be made available if DFCS support staff are notified at least 2 weeks in advance. Meeting documents will be in English and may not be translated.
- Working Group Workspace URL:
  
  https://www.sccgov.org/sites/ssa/dfcs/Pages/prevention.aspx
  
  - Charter
  - Agendas
  - Notes

Meeting Ground Rules

1. Support and encourage relationship building
2. Be open to other’s perspectives
3. Listen with intention
4. Participation is key
5. Begin on time and end on time
6. Record issues discussed, decisions made, and tasks assigned.
7. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
8. It’s OK to disagree, respectfully and openly, and without being disagreeable.
9. Allow every voice to be heard.
10. Respect each other’s thinking and value everyone’s unique perspectives and experience.
11. Be prepared to contribute to achieving the meeting goals.
12. Use I statements.

VIII. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents will support the PAG by:

- Provide perspective and be able to identify key or emerging issues for the group to consider;
- Review agendas and attend all meetings if possible;
- Articulate and reflect the interests that advisory group members bring to the table;
- Complete necessary assignments prior to each meeting;
- Relay information to constituents (if applicable) after each meeting and gather information/feedback before each meeting;
- Maintain a focus on solutions that benefit the larger good;
- Provide feedback and recommendations on-going.

DFCS team agree to:

- Provide PAG members the opportunity to collaborate with DFCS agency staff and effectively manage the scope, schedule and budget of any proposed strategies or initiatives as it relates to the PAG chart of work;
- Keep PAG partners informed of progress;
- Provide documentation to support recommendations;
- Provide technical expertise;
- Brief local decision makers and produce briefing materials and reports;
- Manage logistics for meetings; and
- Explain the reasons when deviations are taken from PAG recommendations.

IX. Decision Making

The PAG is primarily advisory. In those areas where it has some decision-making authority, members will strive to reach agreement by consensus at a level that indicates that all partners are willing to “live with” the proposed action. PAG members will work expeditiously and try to avoid revisiting decisions once made. Agency Director will retain final decision-making authority.
Decisions and recommendations should be grounded through a Trauma Informed and Racial Equity Lens:
- Is this practice or recommendation good for children and families of color?
- Do some children and families benefit more or less than others?
- Do kids and families of color have access, and if not, why?
- What data and information is missing?
- Are there any unintended consequences?

X. Conflict Resolution

When an issue arises that cannot be easily resolved, PAG members agree to:
- Determine if the issue should be resolved within or outside of the PAG.
- Ensure the appropriate decision makers are at the table to resolve the issue.

XI. Updates to the Charter

This charter may be amended at any regular meeting of the Parent Advisory Group by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members, provided that the membership is notified in writing of any proposed amendments to the charter prior to convening of the meeting when there are any amendments discussed and acted upon.