**Cook Transformation Team Recommendations for DCFS Strategic Plan**

* Recommendation: all staff within DCFS and POS agencies at every level participates in an anti-racism training. Effort should be made to include other entities that work with the children and families.
* Recommendation: Restructure/reform child protective services with an emphasis on educating staff and supervisors of systemic racism and its impact on decision making.
* Goal: 1.1.4 Expand University-run First Star Academies across the state to offer youth in care the opportunity to attend life-changing college-readiness programs.
  + Recommendation: The Department should implement academic supports for all youth that receive YIC, DCFS scholarship, or E-TV vouchers as a means to increase their likelihood of success.
* Goal: 2.1.8 Recruit and train Therapeutic Foster Parents.
  + Recommendation: Every effort should be made to identify therapeutic foster homes youths community of origin
* Goal: 2.2.5 Ensure consistency between placement and licensing requirements for permanency purposes.
* Recommendation: Measures should be taken to reduce the time it takes to license a prospective foster parent.
* There should be an established timeline for the licensing process to ensure that homes are licensed within 3 months of a prospective Foster Parent’s initial inquiry. DCFS/POS must follow all the same guidelines and timelines.

DCFS/POS must track and be regularly monitored to ensure adherence to these guidelines and timelines.

* The DCFS/POS representative must contact a prospective foster parent within 24 to 48 hours of receipt of their contact information.
* The DCFS/POS representative shall forward a licensing application to the prospective foster parent on the date of the initial contact, or the prospective foster parent may complete a licensing application on line.
* Licensing Packets should be available at Community Outreach Events.
* The DCFS/POS representative must respond to a completed licensing application within 48 hours of receipt, and set up finger printing for the prospective foster parents.
* Within 48 hours of receiving approved CANTS/LEADS, the DCFS/POS representative must provide prospective foster parents with a schedule of PRIDE trainings, and enroll them at the foster parent’s earliest convenience.
* By the 8th PRIDE session, the DCFS/POS representative must schedule a time to do the Home Study Visit within 2 weeks of the completion of PRIDE.
* The DCFS/POS representative must complete and submit the Home Study to DCFS Licensing in Springfield within 5 business days of the visit.
* DCFS Licensing must administer the License within 10 business days of the receipt of the home study and completed application.
* Under extenuating circumstances for Relative, Fictive Kin, and Traditional Foster homes, this entire process can be expedited.

* Goal: 2.5.4 Continue to train and partner with caregivers to develop understanding of early childhood development, parent/child attachment, developmental screening, and other quality assessments.
  + Recommendation: Provide youth incentives for obtaining permanency in their teens by offering, once again, enhanced adoption / guardianship services. For instance, offer youth that obtain permanency after age 16 accesses to YIC, employment assistance program, vocational training programs like Added Chance, etc. Many foster parents and youth alike forgo permanency so that they may take advantage of teen services offered by DCFS.
* Goal: 2.6.5 Assess and update Specialized Foster Care to better serve the needs of children.
  + Recommendation: Make every effort to recruit and train specialized foster parents in the youth’s community of origin. Use statistics to determine the communities where the greatest need for foster placements exists.
* Goal: 3.2 To provide access to the least restrictive placements with trauma informed services for youth involved in both child welfare and juvenile justice utilizing the Regenerations and the Pay for Success Dually Involved Youth pilots.
  + Recommendation: Train Regenerations staff on the impact of childhood trauma and mental illness.
* Goal: 3.7.9 Hire additional staff as needed.
  + Recommendation: Make active efforts to recruit, hire and retain professionals of color in every aspect of the child welfare system, particularity in the Central and Southern regions of the state.

* Goal: 3.9.2 Need for working with foster parents, relatives and fictive kin differently.
  + Recommendation: Include cultural competency training in the curriculum for foster parents, relatives and fictive kin.
* Goal: 4.6.4 Increase education regarding Sexual Health, Contraception and Family Planning.
  + Recommendation: Offer all youth over the age of 15 access to some form of family planning / sexual education service.
* Goal: 4.9.1 Formalize best practices for the pregnant and/or parenting teen youth in care population and integrate into statewide program plans, training, and service delivery.
  + Recommendation: Make efforts to ensure that these youth stay in or near their home of origin to increase natural supports.
* Goal: 6.1.2 Host Regional Town Halls for Strategic Plan feedback
  + Recommendation: Take steps to increase community involvement, and reduce the attendance of child welfare professionals. Allow time for comments and feedback.