

New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Department of Children and Families
Allison Blake, Ph.D., LSW, Co- Chair
Dr. Martin A. Finkel, Co- Chair
March 22, 2013
9:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Minutes

In Attendance

Mark Ali	Essex County Prosecutor's Office
Diana Autin	SPAN
Allison Blake	Commissioner
Lauren Carlton	Department of Law and Public Safety
James Chester	Foster & Adoptive Family Services
Kathy Collins	Monmouth Cares
Maura Somers Dughi	Child and Family Advocate
Martin A. Finkel	CARES Institute
Rita Gulden	CASA of NJ
Natasha Johnson	Department of Human Services
Herbert Kaldany	Department of Corrections
Marianne Majewski	Catholic Charities
Robert DeNigris McCormick	Montclair State University
Clinton Page	Department of Children and Families
Natasha Palmer	Department of Education
David Peck	Department of Children and Families
Gloria Rodriguez	Department of Health & Senior Services
Joseph Ribsam	Department of Children and Families
Robert Ring	Department of Children and Families
Shabnam Salih	Senator Turner's Office
Cynthia VanBrunt	CASA of Monmouth County

Staff:

Adrienne E. Jackson	DCF – NJTFCAN
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Introduction and Welcome

Meeting notice was read and introductions were made.

Review of Meeting Minutes

January meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

Tour of DCF Child Welfare Training Academy

Robert Ring, Director of the DCF Child Welfare Training Academy, provided a comprehensive tour of the 107,000 square foot facility. He explained the academy was established to create a quality training program and environment for all personnel in the State's child protective services system. The training academy works in partnership with New Jersey's social work and child welfare

professionals, higher education communities and other practitioners who serve children and families. Discussion continued around courses offered and training schedule. Last year, over 50,000 people were trained and over 200 courses were offered. The tour of the facility continued; task force members had an opportunity to assess and explore several classrooms including simulated classroom set-ups.

DCF Update

Commissioner Blake provided brief remarks around the work of the department. She began by advising the group that the proposed budget is online and the hearing is scheduled in late April. Discussion continued around Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). A handout was provided about the CQI process. The department completed its second full year of qualitative reviews across the state and an annual report is scheduled to be issued. Relative to this, a new workgroup was formed to develop a qualitative review process/tool for the behavioral health system. This group is co-chaired by the Assistant Commissioner of Performance Management and Accountability and the Director of Children's System of Care. Along the same lines, the department is in process of developing a shadow process to understand the CQI tool. A two-day training will be offered together with the opportunity to participate in a two-day QR in a particular county.

Last year the department announced the creation of a new task force called HYTIP or Task Force on Helping Youth Thrive in Placement. Comprised of stakeholders, service providers and youth across the state, HYTIP was tasked with supporting youth in out-of-home placement and ensuring these individuals achieve rich and fulfilling lives. The first report was completed and can be found on DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/adolescent/TaskForceHYTIP.pdf>. Members were encouraged to review this report.

Conversation continued around recovery work. Relative to this, Commissioner Blake discussed some of the work happening in impacted areas including plans to expand Family Success Centers and general relief efforts.

Children's Justice Act (CJA) grants were made available to the DCF domestic violence lead agencies in every county. These agencies were selected to provide innovative approaches to improve the assessment and investigative handling of cases of child abuse and neglect where there is the co-occurrence of domestic violence. This funding initiative specifically required the Division of Child Protection and Permanency professionals be included as the target audience.

New Business

Four Categories of Finding

Joseph Ribsam Jr., Esq., Assistant Commissioner of Legal, Regulatory and Legislative Affairs and Clinton Page, Esq., Legal Specialist, provided a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation of the Four Categories of Findings. They started by providing background information around the new regulation. On April 1, 2013, the DCF modified its findings relative to child abuse and neglect investigations. Previously, the DCF had two categories: unfounded and substantiated.

The new four category system – substantiated, established, not established and unfounded - was designed to provide specific finding categories to allow the DCF to appropriately reflect a particular circumstance presented in an investigation that allowed for enhanced partnership with families and improved outcomes for children. In addition to this, it was discussed that the new system provided fairness in the operation of the Child Abuse Record Information system and allowed the DCF to better protect children by requiring the maintenance of all records where children were harmed or exposed to risk of harm, even where the statutory definition of child abuse or neglect could not be met. A color handout was provided that illustrated the investigative decision making process. Adrienne agreed to post this document and the PowerPoint presentation following the meeting.

Paperless Task Force Tutorial

David Peck, Supervisor, of DCF Office of Information and Technology, provided a brief PowerPoint presentation of a tutorial around accessing myNewJersey account. A short overview of efforts around going paperless was discussed. Essentially, all task force related documents such as agendas, meeting minutes, reports, membership information - and more - can be retrieved electronically. David agreed to grant access to this account to all members following the meeting.

NJTFCAN Business

Biennial Conference

The Biennial Conference is scheduled Friday, September 20, 2013. Denise, Diana, Maura, Natasha Johnson and Dr. Finkel agreed to participate on the workgroup. Adrienne agreed to arrange a conference call to discuss the conference theme following the meeting.

Subcommittee/Committee Update

Communication Committee – *Kathy Collins*

The first draft of the 3rd annual report is projected to be done April 15th. Committee/Subcommittee Chairs were asked to provide reports on the status of their committee on/or before April 1st

Prevention Committee – Maura Somers Dughi

This committee continues to work on the revision of Standards for Prevention. The Director of FCP met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of this committee. This meeting was described as productive and plans to update the 2010-2013 Prevention Plan were developed.

Protection – Mark Ali

The human trafficking workgroup met March 21, 2013. Members established the following workgroup composition: 1) Therapeutic/mental health/medical 2) Law Enforcement 3) Victim Witness – advocacy/victim service provider 4) Child Protection and 5) Survivor. The next meeting scheduled is April 30, 2013.

Next Meeting/Announcement

May 31, 2013

SPAN Biannual Statewide Parent Leadership and Advocacy Conference rescheduled to April 20, 2013, Atlantic City, NJ.

8th National Conference on Child Abuse is April 19, 2013