

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
October 10, 2014
9:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Minutes

In Attendance

Mark Ali	Essex County Prosecutor's Office
Lorraine Augustini	Office of the Public Defender
Diana Autin	Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Mary Jane Awrachow	Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS)
Marygrace Billek	Mercer County DHS
Allison Blake	DCF - Commissioner
Christene DeWitt-Parker	Department of Education
Maura Somers Dughi	Child and Family Advocate
Alfred Federico	Mercer County Superior Court
Martin A. Finkel	CARES Institute
Rita Gulden	CASA of New Jersey
Natasha Johnson	Department of Health
Joseph Ribsam	DCF-Deputy Commissioner

DCF Staff:

Ifeanyi Pole	DCF – Office of the Commissioner
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Introductions and Review of Minutes

Introductions were made.

The May 2014 minutes were approved.

Updates from Commissioner Blake

Commissioner Allison Blake provided the Task Force with an update on the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) initiatives. DCF has developed a number of systems over the years to collect data used to develop services and make decisions around service gaps. Through the Data Fellows Program, the Qualitative Review Process and Child Stat, services gaps have been examined over the last several months. DCF announced two Request for Proposals (RFP) for new Family Success Centers (FSC) in Atlantic City and West Milford New Jersey for a main site and a satellite. The RFPs are different due to the feedback received from workers and stakeholders; however the model remains the same.

Commissioner Blake stated that as DCF is improving, a greater number of children are being served in their home than children in placement. In an effort to keep families out of the system, DCF is beginning to link families to the home visitation programs and to the FSCs. Due to the limited resources in prevention, DCF Data Fellows Program identified service gaps and funds are being moved from Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) into Family and Community Partnerships (FCP) to begin new services. In addressing some of the Prevention Committee members' concerns regarding prevention funding, Commissioner Blake informed the Committee that DCF's

focus is on a continuum of care and linking different state agencies with supporting communities and healthy families.

Commissioner Blake announced that an RFP was released for service programs to address the co-occurrence of substance abuse. The substance abuse services for adolescents who have transitioned from the Department of Human Services (DHS) to DCF over a year and a half ago. DCF is working with the existing providers that have substance abuse contracts with the State. There will be an additional ten beds and an expansion for treatment services for parents involved in the child welfare system with substance abuse disorders. Commissioner Blake will provide additional information about this initiative at future meetings.

Additionally, DCF has hired Mollie Greene as the new Director of Clinical Services. Mollie has extensive experience with substance abuse disorders and mental health.

Commissioner Blake informed the Task Force that in this year's budget, there was an addition for a pilot program for mental health collaboration. This collaboration allows pediatricians the opportunity to consult with child psychiatrists. The RFP is out for a pilot program for one year. DCF has referenced similar pilot programs in other states and has partnered with the Department of Health (DOH) on this initiative. The RFP has an evaluation component to generate data from this pilot.

The Task Force was informed of DCF's initiative which seeks to address why certain families, known as "frequently encountered families," keep reentering the system with housing instability as an underlying issue. DCF staff visited New York City to review their "Keeping Families Together" model. The model focuses on creating housing opportunities as a critical factor in a family's ability to be strengthened and provide wrap around services. Commissioner Jennifer Velez from the Department of Human Services (DHS) has agreed to provide the housing vouchers that require there is a co-occurrence of mental health and substance abuse. Family Connections of Essex County won the contract for ten beds. DCF received many responses from the Request for Information (RFI) from community and county agencies offering housing vouchers if DCF provides the wrap around services.

The Commissioner discussed DCF's plan to move toward the use of evidence-based and evidence-informed practice and the development of a trauma informed system of care. DCF invested time looking at the California Clearing House on evidence supported practice, in which; DCF has assembled a small evidence-based practices advisory committee. The advisory committee and DCF staff will be meeting to discuss what it means to be evidenced-based, evidence-informed, evidence-supported and to develop the basic framework and principles for New Jersey to use as a guide. More information on this initiative will be provided at future meetings.

Commissioner Blake updated the Task Force on the 2014/2015 trauma symposium series. This series allows DCF to begin introducing staff and stakeholders to the concepts of becoming a trauma informed system of care. DCF has partnered with University Behavioral Health Care (UBHC) at Rutgers in rolling out an organizational needs assessment. DCF staff is going through the survey and Chadwick Center will collect the data and provide a final report to DCF. As a part of this process, stakeholders, families and youth will have an opportunity to participate in focus groups.

The last symposium will take place in June 2015 and the Chadwick Center will complete the report and submit it to DCF in order for DCF to determine the next steps.

In addition there was further discussion about the absence of youth representation at the Task Force meetings. Commissioner Blake informed the Committee that DCF has been trying to recruit a youth Task Force member for some time. Some of the barriers discussed were the age of the youth member, transportation issues and the early time the current meetings are being held. Commissioner Blake invited the Task Force members to send Ifeanyi Pole the contact information of any youth candidates proposed for nomination. This topic will be added to the next meeting agenda along with a discussion on moving the meetings to a different time. Also, Ifeanyi will check the bylaws with regards to the youth representation on the Task Force.

NJTFCAN Business

Subcommittee/Committee Applications - Task Force

The Task Force approved Lisa von Pier, Doug Behan and Christene DeWitt-Parker applications for the Task Force committees.

Subcommittee/Committee Updates

Communication Committee – Kathy Collins

Dr. Finkel informed the Task Force that Kathy Collins has submitted her letter of resignation to the Task Force. The Governor's Appointment office has been alerted. Kathy will be forwarding a letter of recommendation to the Task Force for the Committee's Vice Chair and open Task Force member seat. Ifeanyi will check the protocol for the voting on the letter of recommendation for the next meeting on November 21, 2014. A letter will be sent to Kathy thanking her for her hard work and well wishes for the future.

Prevention Committee - Maura Somers Dughi

Maura informed the Task Force that the Prevention Committee meeting on October 2, 2014 was focused on the Children's Trust Fund (CTF). The protocol from previous years was mentioned, which led to the DCF Ethics Liaison, Taraun Tice attending the meeting to discuss with the Committee the recusal process and to ensure that interested Committee members are eligible to apply for the CTF. The Committee agreed that the CTF dollars should be used for promoting the Prevention Plan/ Standards and that the funding should meet the criteria of the Prevention Plan. Staff for the Family and Community Partnerships (FCP) will develop the RFP and the request was made for the three Task Force members to volunteer to review the RFPs and for three or four DCF staff to sit in on the process. Natasha Johnson and Marygrace Billek volunteered to review the CTF proposals and the Committee is looking to recruit one more Task Force member who does not have a conflict of interest and meets the ethics criteria.

Protection Committee – Mark Ali

Mark reported that after the Human Trafficking (HT) Workgroup conference call with Susan Goldfarb, Executive Director of Boston Child Advocacy Center (CAC), the HT workgroup decided to establish a best practice document concerning human trafficking. The document will be a two or three pages outline which the workgroup would present to the Task Force and DCF. The workgroup would like to have the document

completed by the end of December 2014. Mark informed the Task Force that Donna Younkin has been a great contributor to the workgroup.

Mark updated the Task Force on the status of John Esmerado's data collection project and report. This report will include data that has been collected from the Promis/Gavel system, which yields issues with the prosecutors' offices and court clerks not properly inputting the correct identifiers in the Promis/Gavel system for certain crimes. John is working on the final draft to be submitted to the Protection Committee and then forwarded to the Task Force.

The Batterers Accountability workgroup, under the direction of Dr. Susan Curcio, has been working a survey for the prosecutor's office that has been delayed longer than expected due to the Internal Review Board (IRB) review. However, Dr. Curcio was informed that the IRB is not needed for this project. The workgroup will be formulating the survey for the prosecutors' offices to assess how they view trauma to children in a household in which domestic violence is present. Also, an email was sent to an old list of the Batterers Accountability members to see if they are still interested in serving on the workgroup.

Mark informed the Task Force that after 26 years in the prosecutor's office, he is submitting his resignation effective November 1, 2014. Mark also mentioned that Acting Prosecutor, Carolyn Murray will be resuming her Task Force membership and attending future meetings. The Task Force wished Mark the best of luck in his future endeavors. Mark thanked Commissioner Blake and Dr. Finkel for their hard work and dedication.

SORS Update – Rita Gulden

Rita informed the Task Force that SORS is working on a follow up survey that was done years ago for DCF staff. Linda Porcaro, Office of Youth Services in Somerset County is taking the lead on the survey. Sara Munson, from the Institute for Families at Rutgers University, will be working with Linda on the questions to include in the survey to make it more focused and informative.

There was a follow up meeting with Robert Ring, director of the DCF Professional Center, to discuss pre-testing, post-testing and to see exactly how the information is being used on future courses that are offered, evaluations and ongoing training for individual staff. SORS was informed that there was a twenty-two percent increase in transfer of knowledge from pre-test to post-test. SORS will be receiving additional information on this topic from Lisa von Pier, and Dawn Leff in consultation with Robert Ring.

Rita discussed the education stability act and how it does not relate to treatment home and group homes. SORS is looking into ways to address this concern. Additional information will be provided to SORS on this topic.

At the July 8, 2014 meeting, Ceil Zalkind presented Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) report on education stability. It is an opinion survey financed by the Casey Foundation. SORS requested additional information from Ceil regarding the geographic information and who were the responders. Lisa von Pier asked for clarification on 1) how often transportation is identified as a barrier to maintaining a child in their own school, and 2) how often it is identified that a CPP worker is not consulting

in a timely manner with all necessary stakeholders to work toward maintaining a child in their own school. Lisa discussed that only the Child Placement Review Board does a 45 day review for a child placed out of their home. The Family Court has their “order to show cause” hearing within 3 days and a return on that hearing usually within 30 days. The NJ Department of Children and Families’ (DCF) Child Protection and Permanency (CPP) has an internal placement review hearing at 5 months.

SORS is looking to recruit a vice chair for their subcommittee.

2014 Biennial Child Protection Skill Building Conference Update-Ifeanyi Pole

Ifeanyi reported on the Task Force Skill Building conference that was held on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 at the DCF Professional Center featuring Dr. Bruce Perry who presented on the Neurodevelopment, Trauma and its Effects on the Brain. There were three hundred and forty people registered, forty no shows and twenty walk in registrations and the event was full to capacity. Dr. Perry was well received and the feedback was very positive. DCF is awaiting the evaluation summary from Rutgers University.

Ifeanyi reported that the Task Force Biennial Conference will be held in Atlantic City in 2015. DCF has partnered with Rutgers University to assist with the logistics for the event. Ifeanyi will provide the Task Force with updates at future meetings.

Announcements

Ifeanyi informed the Task Force about The Male Survivor’s Conference being held in Newark, NJ from October 31 through November 2, 2104 on behalf of Cheryl Mojta of the Communication Committee and the New Jersey Child Assault Prevention (NJ CAP). Each Task Force member received the Save The Date conference informational card.

Dr. Finkel announced that the CARES Institute will be hosting two free symposiums with experts on child abuse and neglect. The first one is scheduled for October 21, 2014 on “Making the Medical Diagnosis of Child Abuse with Medical Certainty” with Dr. Stephen Boos as the keynote speaker. The December 16, 2014 lecture will be held at The Conference Center at Mercer with Dr. Harriet MacMillan presenting on “Psychological Maltreatment of Children: Recognition and Assessment and Response and Prevention. All the Task Force members as well as their staff were invited to register for both lectures; and Dr. Finkel will send out an email with the link.

Proposed 2015 Meeting Dates:

The Task Force approved the 2015 meeting dates with the exception of November 27, 2015 which will be changed to November 20, 2015.

Next Meeting/Announcement – November 21, 2014 – New Brunswick