

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Prevention Committee
Maura Somers Dughi, Esq, Chair
Diana Autin, Esq, Vice-Chair
July 9, 2015
10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Minutes**

In Attendance:

Christine Baker	Metro-RDTC at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center
Christina Colon	DCF-Family and Community Partnership
Diane Dellanno	Advocates for Children of NJ
Maura Somers Dughi	Child and Family Advocacy
Jessica Gregory	DCF-Family and Community Partnerships and Division on Women
Cheryl Mojta	Child Assault Prevention Program
Niurea Louis	Robin's Nest Inc.
Michelle Rupe	DCF-Child Protection and Permanency
Sunday Gustin	DCF- Family and Community Partnerships, Early Childhood Services
Charmaine Thomas	DCF-Family and Community Partnerships and Division on Women

Staff

Ifeanyi Pole	DCF-NJTFCAN
--------------	-------------

Introduction and Review of Minutes

Introductions were made. The May 2015 Minutes were approved without edits.

Business

Prevention Standards Workgroup – Update

Maura Somers Dughi updated the Committee about the Standards for Preventions trainings on behalf of Rush Russell, who was unable to attend the meeting. Maura informed the Committee that Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey (PCA- NJ) held four live webinars since January 2015: Two entitled, "Overview 101" and two on "Advanced Standards for Prevention Programs – Practical Application for Administrators." PCA-NJ created a website that features the webinars and they are now available to download at no cost. PCA-NJ's website tracks the number of attendees who download and view the webinars. Ifeanyi will email the Committee the URL address for the archived webinar trainings. The Committee discussed sending notice about the webinar trainings to the public. The live introductory Basic Overview 101 webinar was viewed by 356 individuals from approximately 60 different organizations/agencies; and the Advanced Standards webinar was viewed by 176 individuals from approximately 50 different organizations/agencies. Since being archived online, the Basic Overview 101 webinar has been viewed 81 times and the Advanced Standards webinar was viewed 9 times, to date. Maura shared the following participant feedback about their webinar experiences with the Committee:

- "I like how interactive it was and both of the presenters kept the presentation moving at a comfortable pace and giving practical examples and adding levity."
- "(The webinar was) very informative and samples were great,
- "The ease of the presenters and the almost conversational way they presented the traditionally dry material - I really like the chat boxes."

- “I truly enjoyed the communal and interactive nature of this webinar and exchange of information from multiple professionals.”
- “I appreciated the fact that we can get such important information for our convenience online and everything was relevant to our work and helping strengthening families.”

The Committee discussed that the funding for the webinar training ended on June 30, 2015 and the workgroup is hoping for wider dissemination and the opportunity to do more. The Committee also discussed DCF requiring the Prevention Standards training in future contracts as well sharing it with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and other Departments that do prevention work.

The Committee discussed the Request for Proposal (RFP) utilizing the Children’s Trust Fund. Charmaine Thomas reported that the RFP went out and the funding should be awarded within the next two weeks. Charmaine informed the Committee that the RFP’s goal is to provide statewide training and work towards making it a requirement in DCF contracts.

Jessica Gregory stated all the program supervisors in Family and Community Partnerships (FCP) viewed how their program matched up to the different categories in the evaluation component. FCP staff was trained and came together to evaluate and discuss where they were and how to make strives for the future. Jessica stated that coming together was a very productive exercise which allowed staff to really examine the Standards for Prevention and evaluate in-depth on how they apply the Standards on a regular basis. Jessica stated that this will probably be done annually.

The Committee discussed incorporating the Standards of Prevention into some of the coursework at New Jersey’s colleges and universities; contact will be made with Kerrie Ocasio and Maureen Braun-Scalera at Rutgers University and DCF Training Academy to discuss the Standards being offered as a course of study. It was also mentioned that the School of Social Work at Kean University and Rutgers University would be a great place to pilot the training. Michelle Rupe informed the Committee of the lecture she did at Bryn Mawr College for a Masters of Social Work class in which prevention was already being taught and implemented in their fields of practice. Michelle agreed to provide Maura with a contact person at the college to see if this would be an avenue to pursue. The Committee also discussed the Standards being offered as training modules as well as having CEUs offered for those who access the online webinar. This topic will be added to the agenda for September. Charmaine informed the Committee that Gina will be providing DCF with a list of people who have completed the webinar so that certificates can be sent out to them.

The Committee also discussed that agencies that have contracts with DCF should be encouraged to display the link for the Standards for Prevention on their websites and the administrators should be required to take the training to ensure agencies’ are executing prevention work. The Committee will continue to discuss this topic and it will be added to the agenda for September. For the September meeting, the Committee will select a subgroup to work on this topic to come up with the next steps.

Prevention Plan Implementation Workgroup

Maura Somers Dughi provided the Committee with Diana Autin’s updates. Diana has completed four of the five interviews which she has shared the interviews with the interviewees for their review prior to finalizing them and submitting it to the Committee. Recommendations that came out of the interviews are as follows:

- The Prevention Plan document would be strengthened by having a specific section or specific recommendations for agencies and organizations for which child abuse prevention/family support is a secondary as opposed to primary mission.

- There must be training on the Plan and on the Standards available for non-DCF programs and it should be tailored to audiences for whom child abuse or prevention/family support is a secondary as opposed to primary mission.
- It would be very beneficial for moving implementation of the plan and the standards forward across agencies if the Commissioner of DCF met with the Commissioners of other agencies to explain the importance of the plan and the standards and ask what they can do to make their staff and grantees more aware.

There were several ideas discussed concerning how different state agencies could work to implement the Prevention Plan and the Standards for Prevention within their agencies including:

- Encouraging their grantees to participate in the archived webinars.
- Host a presentation on the Plan and the Standards at their grantee meetings (most state agencies have periodic meetings with their grantees).
- Putting a link to the Prevention Standards and Prevention Plan as well as any available archived trainings on their websites

The Committee was informed that the interviews with the Department of Educations (DOE) have not taken place to date. However, they are scheduled to take place before the next meeting in September. The Prevention Plan and the Standards were sent in advance to DOE in preparation of the meeting.

Ifeanyi Pole will follow-up with Diana Autin to obtain the final list of members assigned to interview each State agency.

Improving Outcomes for Families and Infants and Young Children – Michelle Rupe, Sunday Gustin, Christina Colon

Michelle Rupe provided the Committee with background information regarding the project. This initiative started about five or six years ago in Cape May County with the Data Fellows Project. At the time, DCF was looking at families that were referred multiple times for child abuse and neglect investigation known as “frequently encountered families. Over an eighteen month period, an analysis of about 200 families was conducted and the conclusion yielded a certain profile that included predominately families with infants and young children with no immediate safety concerns/reasons for court involvement; however, there were very moderate to high risk in the areas of domestic violence, substance abuse, poverty, social isolation and poor parenting. It was also noted that the cases were closed at intake without any services or support as the family declined voluntary services. It was also noted that the investigators were not necessarily paying attention to the family history or collaborating with systems partners. After the Data Fellows project, another pilot was done in Burlington County to address these areas which Dr. Gerry Costa, child welfare training staff and system partners around the needs of infants, small children and parenting.

Michelle provided the Committee with a handout, entitled, “Bringing the Protective Factors to Life”, which was drafted as a result of the training in March 2015. Approximately 400 people rated this training as really positive and enjoyed the opportunity to get together with other systems partners to begin to establish a relationship.

On June 10, 2015, DCF started bringing all the system partners together. One family for each of the three Local Offices is conferenced for an hour each week. Michelle provided the Committee with a handout entitled, “Group Conference Agenda” which is used to conference the families using the multidisciplinary team approach. The findings from the conferencing of fifteen families were very

positive from child welfare staff and the children are safe as they would not be able to conference. This allows for a deeper look into the family's history, identifying risk factors that would not be identified in the current referral and systematically looking at each area as a team to increase protective factors. Also, the handout was presented to the leadership team in Newark on July 7, 2015 to update them on what has happened to date and highlights things that are being learned and some of the contributions from team members. Michelle also stated that there has been enthusiasm so early into the project from all the partners. It was also mentioned that Rutgers will be doing the evaluations with follow-up interviews with families beginning about the six week mark after the families have been referred. Eleven families out of fifteen have agreed to participate in the survey research. Kerrie Ocasio will be leading her team with phone interviews to access what is happening from parent's perspective and how well engaged they are with DCF and all the system partners. The Committee was informed that the families are notified at intake and given a flyer regarding the consent to participate in the project. The conferencing is looking at the subset of families that fit into the category of parents between the ages of 18-30 years old with children ranging from birth to age five. The Committee was also informed that families that do not wish to participate will still benefit of the conferencing if they fit into the category for now. The goal is to have this program support the Local Office and still have the group conferenced, however it will not be included in the research piece, which is looking at if the group conferencing process changed family's outcome. The Committee discussed if Rutgers would be profiling families that declined to participate in the research to poll their responses; the Committee will try to trouble shoot why these families do not want to participate and how it will impact child welfare practice and the value of this. It was discussed that Implementation Science is becoming a factor for transformations at all levels. Michelle stated that there is a chronic condition of poverty in Newark and that the hope to correct this through partnerships; she also stated that abuse at different levels seems to be part of the underlying issues that face these families.

Michelle introduced Christina Colon, the staff that was funded for one year with CTF funding to work on the Essex County Collaborative Project, to the Committee. Michelle informed the Committee that Christina is well versed and worked with the community and welfare in Miami. Christina informed the Committee that using the information from a family with a child under 5 years of age is referred to EPPC as their central intake. Christina stated that the Children's Trust fund is critical to this project and will help bridge the community, workers and EPPC all together. The Committee discussed that intervention is the key in early child development and engaging the mom is essential. It was discussed that the Burlington Community intake programs are even stronger than they were before. Michelle also informed the Committee that a clinical consultant is desperately needed in Newark and Christina Colon will help in this coordination.

Maura asked for the Committee to forward her their feedback on the Prevention Committees' 2014-2015 activities summary.

Announcements

Ifeanyi reminded the Committee about the 2015 Biennial Task Force Conference that will be held on September 9th in New Brunswick, New Jersey under the "Kinship Care and Family Connections" theme.

Workgroup Convened - Next Meeting – September 3, 2015 – Trenton