



Prevention Committee

Maura Somers Dughi, Esq, Chair

Diana Autin, Esq, Vice-Chair

March 3, 2016

10:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Minutes

In Attendance:

Autin, Diana	Child and Family Advocacy
Baker, Christine	Metro-Regional Diagnostic & Treatment Ctr. at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center
Braun-Scalera, Maureen	Rutgers School of Social Work
Breitwieser, Andrea	DHS - Div. of Family Development
Budka, Sharon	DCF - Family and Community Partnerships
Christian, Arnold	Department of Law and Public Safety
Colon, Christina	DCF - Family and Community Partnership
Conrad, Suzanne	Consultant
Dellanno, Diane	Advocates for Children of NJ
Gregory, Jessica	DCF - Family and Community Partnerships and Division on Women
Louis, Niurca	Robins' Nest, Inc.
Mojta, Cheryl	Child Assault Prevention Program
Mojta, Patty	Prevent Child Abuse NJ
Ocasio, Kerrie	Rutgers School of Education
Scott, Lenore	DCF - Family and Community Partnerships
Shpiegel, Svetlana	Montclair University
Thomas, Charmaine	DCF - Family and Community Partnerships and Division on Women
Wendi White	Department of Corrections of NJ

Staff

Ifeanyi Pole	DCF-Office of the Commissioner
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Review of Minutes

The January 7, 2016 Minutes were approved without edits.

Business:

Prevention Course Development Workgroup – Update

Kerri Ocasio informed the Committee that this Workgroup had experienced some difficulties with the computer system and the ability to dedicate more time to proceed in researching the course work. Kerrie also stated that Patty Mojta and Niurca Louis finished a preliminary part of the protective factors and separate subcommittees have been identified to continue the curriculum research. Ifeanyi Pole will assist Kerrie in scheduling the Workgroup's next conference call.

Prevention Plan Implementation Workgroup-Update

Diana Autin informed the Committee that there are approximately ten to twelve State agencies that have been contacted by the Workgroup members to be interviewed for this project. Once each member has contacted their selected agency, they will have a deadline of two weeks to compile this input in a summary report and present their information at the next meeting.

Prevention Standards Workgroup-Update

The Committee was informed that the previous conference call included the discussion of developmental options for the Standards for Prevention (Standards) curriculum. The Committee was also informed that the Standards training will begin the end of April 2016. The response rate and the self-assessment programs that were used in the curriculum handbook for parents (also available online) were also discussed and will remain open for later references if needed. There was an increase in the number of parent leaders' recruitment. The response rate has been encouraging and it is hopeful that the knowledge that the parents gain will help them when they go back to provide other parents with information. Those being trained will be compensated. The Committee was informed that the handbook offers parents questions that they could be asking as consumers so that their needs are met in the community. The Committee discussed that it is important for the success of the curriculum to properly relate to the families and their needs. The Committee also discussed having the participating parents to assist in developing the Standards. The Committee was informed that Rutgers is closely working on breaking down the groups according to their programs to enhance the training of the parents and the curriculum. The Workgroup is reviewing the synopsis of the self-assessments; 41 of the 50 Family Success Centers and other programs have responded to date.

Improving Outcomes for Families of Infants and Young Children - Update

Christina Colon informed the Committee that the Improving Outcomes for Families of Infants and Young Children project is in the 8th month of intake referrals. The DCF Newark local office begins the intake process through Essex Pregnancy and Parenting Connections. Also, the caseworkers contact DCF's Family Success Centers for additional information and referrals for their clients; this "warm handoff" involves two different workers coordinating information on one family at a time. Home visits are viewed as an easier interview because the worker develops a trusting relationship with that family and DCF's Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P). Suzanne Conrad requested that trauma assessments be included in the outcomes.

Christina also informed the Committee that it was first believed that once families were referred, then CP&P's involvement was completed. Instead, it has recently been experienced that many of the families are going straight to CP&P for further assistance and other services, not related to removals. Also, home visits may sometimes seem like they are competing with CP&P, however, these are actually contracted through the CP&P with parent aides and mentors. Christina stated that caseworkers can even be in the home nine to twelve hours a week to help stabilize the family so that other services can be offered such as substance abuse treatment services, in which the case requires supervision. Christina informed the Committee of the challenges recognized through intake and then onto permanency where a discussion between both caseworkers can be coordinated. Christina shared the following case example with the Committee:

A mother was referred and she wanted to put the baby up for adoption. CP&P was able to provide assistance for the mother, baby and the father. There were language barriers and an interpreter was brought in to assist in learning about the family's needs; this was very successful step in assisting the mother and her family.

Christina also stated that caseworkers have encouraged the coordination of services once the intake has been completed so that additional resources can be researched for the betterment of the family.

Children's Trust Fund Campaign – Prevention/Communication Committee Workgroup

Jessica Gregory informed the Committee that approximately \$478,000 is currently in the Children's Trust Fund (CTF). Jessica stated that CTF contributions are listed in the 2014-2015 NJTFCAN report.

Lenore Scott informed the Committee that Christina Colon's contract is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2016. Lenore and Charmaine Thomas asked the Committee to recommend to the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (NJTFCAN) to approve additional New Jersey Children's Trust Fund (NJCTF) money to fund Christina's salary for an additional year so that she may continue her critical work in the community. The Committee was informed that approximately 40% of the 150 referrals in this project have moved to permanency; some of these families have experienced substance abuse and poverty. The Committee was informed that research will help to see the cost savings of services through CP&P. Lenore informed the Committee that reaching families early is critical in prevention rather than having them seek extensive assistance in permanency. Christina clarified for the Committee that if a case is open after an extended amount of referrals, it is automatically opened in permanency and this needs to be phased out of prevention. The Committee was informed that many of the referrals that are worked on involve chronic poverty.

The Committee inquired about the project's data to date and Kerrie Ocasio stated that there is presently review of a comparison group that uses a randomized design of 75 parents in the prevention group and around 50 parents in the control group. This research includes parent interviews and administrative data to understand how parents' access to services might be impacted by the practice. Focus groups are being formed in the case conferences to get the perspectives of CP&P and community partners that participated in the conferences. DCF's Early Childhood programs have many services and expertise to help in the prevention for families in need and have been invaluable. Kerrie informed the Committee of possible systemic factors in data regarding the prevention of families to include a better support of workers and the engagement of the family; this data will be reviewed and analyzed.

The Committee discussed that last year they voted to recommend CTF funding for Christina Colon's salary for one year. Charmaine stated that she would forward the Committee a summary report on the Improving Outcomes for Families of Infants and Young Children project. Diana reminded the Committee that its role is to recommend the amount of CTF dollars to NJTFCAN and how it should be spent; NJTFCAN makes the final decision. A phone conference will be scheduled to discuss a recommendation that can be sent to the Task Force for their vote before the end of April 2016.

Diana informed the Prevention Committee that Communication Committee would like to recruit 3 or 4 people from the Prevention Committee to serve on a Children's Trust Fund Campaign Workgroup; Suzanne Conrad, Diane Dellanno, Niurca Louis, and Cheryl Mojta volunteered to serve on this Workgroup.

Parent Leadership Development Training Presentation - Sharon Budka

Sharon Budka disseminated handouts about DCF's Parent Leadership Development Trainings to the Committee. This project is funded by federal Race to the Top funds, an early learning challenge grant. DCF awarded this grant to the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN).

Sharon informed the Committee of the March 3, 2016 Kick-Off Webinar discussing Parents as Partners in Shared Leadership and disseminated a corresponding flyer about the training. The webinar will be providing an overview of training to the county council. At least three members, project coordinators, parent leader, and one stakeholder will be trained to be the trainers for the rest of the council members. There will be regional face-to-face meetings set up to cover all 21 counties throughout New Jersey.

Sharon stated the importance of equipping parents to aid their community and promote leadership for others. Also, she also indicated that recognizing the parents' knowledge is critical in uplifting parents' self-worth and leadership. The county council ensures candidates that are submitted to SPAN are the individuals that are really interested in participating in all capacities of that training. Sustainability of this for the parents and community is crucial. Leadership encourages interacting with other community partners and webinars.

New Business

Diana reminded the Committee that applications for committee membership must be completed and submitted by Monday, March 14, 2016.

Announcements

Cheryl Mojta informed the Committee about the 1st International Child Abuse Conference will be held on April 14, 2016 and will honor NJTFCAN, Commissioner Blake, and host individuals from many countries.

Diana informed the Committee of an event “Luminary Conversations” being hosted by ACNJ on April 20, 2016 that will focus on autism and other mental health issues facing families today. She also disseminated copies of the event flyer to the Committee.

Diana shared copies of a Milestone Moments brochure in English and Spanish entitled, “Track Your Child’s Developmental Milestones.”

Diana informed the Committee that she may not be attending upcoming meetings as of June 1, 2016 because she may be serving as the half time co-Director for Span and for the National Family Voices for Family Professional Partnerships. Diana is awaiting the status of this opportunity and if approved, she would need to resign from all committees in New Jersey.

Next Meeting – May 5th at 10:00 am (50 East State Street, 2nd Floor, Commissioner’s Large Conference Room).