

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee
Ceil Zalkind, Esq, Chair
Rita Gulden, M.S.W., Vice-Chair
September 11, 2012
10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Minutes**

In Attendance

Marygrace Billek	Mercer County Human Services
James Chester	Foster and Adoptive Family Services
Maura Dughi-Somers	Child and Family Advocate
Amy Fischer	Administrative Office of the Courts
Rita Gulden	CASA of New Jersey
Joann Hollender	DCF-Children's System of Care
Debra Jennings	SPAN, Inc.
Laurie McCabe	Senate Designee for Senator Vitale
Ryan Michelson	Senator Vitale
Nancy Parelo	Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Linda Porcaro	Somerset County Office of Youth Services
John Ramos	DCF – Child Protection and Permanency
Barbara Rusen (via Tele)	DCF - Chief of Staff
Cecilia Zalkind	Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Jackie Zavaglia	DCF-Office of Advocacy

Staff

Adrienne E. Jackson	DCF-NJTFCAN
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Introduction and Review of Minutes

Introductions were made and July meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

The subcommittee reviewed and discussed DCF responses to the recommendations of SORS in its 2011 – 2012 Annual Report. Adrienne agreed to distribute the letter to the members following the meeting.

Office of Advocacy Presentation

Jacqueline Zavaglia, Director, of the Office of Advocacy (OOA) provided an in-depth review of the work of this office. She began by giving a brief overview of the scope of the work, history, role and goal of OOA. Established in September 2010, the DCF Office of Advocacy assists the department in its mission to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children and to support families by providing information, referral and advocacy services.

The Office of Advocacy gathers feedback and identifies issues and trends to help DCF work in collaboration with its partner agencies to improve services to children and families. This is done through interaction with the Office of Performance Management and Accountability, governmental leaders and agencies, partners, families and the

community. Constituents with inquiries, concerns or questions can contact the OOA toll free at 1-877-543-7864 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Constituents may also email OOA at askdcf@dcf.state.nj.us. The goal is to enhance customer service by working directly with liaisons in each DCF Division and Office to ensure timely resolution of issues and concerns. Office of Advocacy brochure was distributed to members.

Activities and Measures

Committee goals approved; activities identified. In the interest of time, a workgroup was developed to move this work forward. Adrienne agreed to schedule a conference call with the group to finalize the measures.

Current Child Visitation

SORS reviewed Child Protection and Permanency visitation policy, OCA 2010 Report and July 2012 monitor's report. The discussion was informed by an assessment of these documents. Conversation ensued about the issue of current child/sibling visitation and challenge of not meeting bench marks. A rich discussion followed and members agreed to continue to explore this issue as several questions were raised around the data and information in general. Ceil and Nancy agreed to draft a memo asking for information; same would be distributed to SORS for final approval prior to submitting to DCF leadership.

Social Service Student Loan Redemption Program

Commissioner Blake was formally recused from this discussion. Laurie McCabe provided brief remarks around the Social Service Student Loan Redemption Program. Members received information relative to this initiative prior to the meeting. Laurie agreed to look into annual appropriation and placement of participants. Adrienne will explore whether or not DCF has data around this program.

Next Meeting & Announcements

November 13, 2012.