

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)
Rita Gulden, MSW = Chair
Linda Porcaro = Vice-Chair
Tuesday November 10, 2015: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Foster and Adoptive Family Services
4301 Route 1 South
Monmouth Junction, N.J. 609-520-1500**

In Attendance- In Person

Mary Jane Awrachow	Foster and Adoptive Family Services
Amy Fischer	Administrative Office of the Courts
Rita Gulden	CASA of NJ
Mary Hallahan	Upper Freehold Regional School District/Resource Parent
Lori Morris	CASA Mercer/Burlington
Sara Munson	Institute for Families/Rutgers University
Patricia Myers	Legal Services of New Jersey
Linda Porcaro	Somerset Co. Office of Youth Services
Aubrey Powers	DCF Assistant Commissioner

In Attendance- Conference Line

Maura Dughi-Somers	Child and Family Advocate
Lisa Nemeth	Dept. of Law & Public Safety
Nancy Parelo	Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Staff

Dawn M. Leff	DCF-NJTFCAN SORS
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Review of Minutes:

Introductions were made and the September 2015 minutes were reviewed by the members and approved.

New Business:

Presentation: DCF Resource Care Recruitment and Retention

Colette Tobias, DCP&P Administrator Office of Resource Families along with Michelle Adams, DCP&P Deputy Director Office of Resource Families, Licensing, Interstate & Adoption Operations provided a presentation on the DCF resource recruitment and retention efforts. Colette gave a brief overview of her collective and comprehensive work with resource care in DCF and has been an instrumental part of the reform efforts.

Colette gave comparative data on children in placement and resource capacity prior to and since the reform efforts. Before the reform it was reported that DCF had over 12,000 children in placement with about 4,000 foster homes to accommodate them. To date these numbers have reversed.

It was reported that since 2006 DCF has been setting and reporting local and county based targets to recruit resource homes as per the MSA requirements and since 2006 has met or exceeded the identified targets with a highlight in 2007-2009 of net gains over 800 families per year. Colette gave an overview of resource staff and roles and identified that Resource care and Office of Licensing has partnered as part of the reform to assist in the licensing process of resource homes to include broadening the licensing requirements to ensure relative resource homes can be approved. To date, more than 50% of children are placed with relatives.

It was reported that through recruitment efforts DCF has over 12,000 resource bed capacities to accommodate about 6,500 children in placement. Colette provided a geo-maps of the statewide resource home capacity and the children in placement (origin of removal from home) to show that recruitment efforts are being done in the areas where needed. Colette reported that recruitment efforts have evolved over the years from casting a wide net to capture resource home to developing targeted strategies. With the assistance of the National Resource Center at Adopt US KIDS one successful tool being used which has become infused into recruitment practice is Market Segmentation. This marketing tool includes five fundamental elements:

1. Data driven- to include geographic targets and sub-populations such as large sibling groups and adolescents
2. Culturally competent
3. Delivers right message
4. Retention obsessive
5. Community based

In defining what a successful resource family looked like, software was used to pull data to identify where these families are located down to the neighborhood to recruit families in the same geographical areas with similar lifestyle characteristics. High index scores were gathered to show recruitment efforts should be targeted in movie theatres, faith based organizations, health care, etc... Colette gave a successful example of recruitment last year where 20 recruiters throughout the state facilitated a weekend recruitment event at movie theatres which yielded over 500 inquiries in one weekend. Recruiters are also forming relationship with businesses to identify and support similar customers. This has been helpful with retention as well. Retention efforts were discussed to include partnering with the NRC to assist in approving retention work as well as partnering with Rutgers to complete a study on the retention of resource families. To support the mission, DCF developed a retention framework and used this to form the Retention Taskforce comprised of DCF staff, resource families, youth, FAFS and external stakeholders.

The taskforce formed 5 breakout groups to reflect the core values of the Taskforce:

1. Management
2. Policy
3. Professional Staff Development
4. Supports
5. Continuous Quality Improvement

Each group has met and compiled recommendations which will be submitted to Assistant Commissioner von Pier and once approved will become the Resource Family Recruitment & Retention Plan.

Colette also discussed the new target setting methodology that focuses on targeted needs while placing an emphasis on retaining existing families through better engagement efforts to encourage better matches for children. Question and answer discussion followed the conclusion of the presentation.

Presentation: Manage by Data Fellows Program

Abbie Dimeo, Coordinator DCF Manage by Data Fellows Program provided a program overview with case study examples. Abbie reviewed some of the data systems to inform CQI to include NJS, Safe Measures, Key Performance Indicator, Qualitative Reviews, ChildStat and other Targeted Review. Abbie also reviewed DCF's commitment to transparency through publically available reports. Abbie discussed development of staff through teaching staff how to be better consumers of data to inform practice and make meaningful changes. Abbie used an example of safe measure screenshot of monthly staff contacts with clients and how to use all the available data on the screens.

Abbie reported that 90% of the time of the program is spent on diagnostics, questioning and formulating hypothesis and investigating quantitative and qualitative data as well as literature reviews. Abbie reported that the initial round of the program was an intensive 18 month program that met once a month however after program review it was condensed to a program of 9 months who meet twice a month. Administrative structure, targeted staff participants, application process as well as program enrollment and retention was reviewed by Abbie as well.

Abbie reviewed project topics from previous rounds to include delayed permanency, frequently encountered families, sibling groups as well as placement and educational stability. Review of the variety of data sources used in the program was discussed to include broad data sources such as US and NJ census data to smaller CP&P local office data sets. Abbie discussed that the present cohort will be focusing on an umbrella topic of Permanency and Reentries. Data review begins with basic data sets such as census or population data sets. Exposure to data from other Divisions is reviewed by the fellow cohorts as well. They also review data over time to see trends and practice in points of time as well as in other places in NJ.

Abbie gave examples of some case studies completed by fellows such as the need for additional services in Passaic County. The case study resulted in the opening of a new Family Success Center to service families in the up-county region in Passaic County.

Abbie discussed about Bright Spot Analysis to identify a goal, find bright spots, study them, replicate the practice elsewhere and track and adjust. The case example used to highlight this was the research on investigations completed within 60 days and how offices can celebrate what works well and replicating it elsewhere to increase practice performance.

Another case example was looking at children who enter care in Mercer County and the overutilization of shelters with teens more so than any other county in the state. Through the research with the goal to decrease teen shelter placements the fellows came up with a shelter protocol and discussed with staff and external stakeholders in Mercer County. Discussions included the Youth Thrive framework. The early data shows a promising decrease in youth shelter use in Mercer County.

Abbie wrapped up the presentation with keys to success, challenges and overall impact of the program. Question and answer discussion followed the conclusion of the presentation.

Old Business:

Tabled due to time restraint

Next Meeting:

Tuesday January 19, 2016

Location: TBA

Announcements & Closure

Dawn Leff reported that copies of both power point presentations will be sent to all subcommittee members electronically and that the DCF Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner wish to come to the January SORS meeting to discuss the Sustainability and Exit Plan.