

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)**

Rita Gulden, MSW = Chair

Linda Porcaro = Vice-Chair

Tuesday July 19, 2016: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

DCF Commissioners Conference Room

50 East State St. 2nd Floor

Trenton, NJ 08625

In Attendance- In Person

Marygrace Billek	Mercer County DHS
Rita Gulden	CASA of NJ
Mary Hallahan	Upper Freehold Regional School District/Resource Parent
Lori Morris	CASA Union
Aubrey Powers	DCF Assistant Commissioner, OPMA
Lisa vonPier	DCF Assistant Commissioner, CP&P

In Attendance- Conference Line

Stephanie Albanese	Legislative Director/Senate Designee
Amy Fischer	Administrative Office of the Courts/Monmouth
Sara Munson	Institute for Families/Rutgers University
Lisa Nemeth	Dept. of Law and Public Safety

Staff

Covering: Damond Yearns DCF-NJTFCAN SORS

Review of Minutes:

Introductions were made to include the Open Public Meeting Announcement and the May 2016 minutes were reviewed by the members and approved.

New Business:

SORS Annual Report

Rita discussed outline and identified that the topic introduction will remain the same since it identifies the SORS charge and proceedings will list the meeting dates. Rita identified herself to complete the summary of activities and focus section. The discussion was opened to the group to identify the priorities of the SORS. Discussion centered on the staff survey and discussions. It was identified that Linda Porcaro will be asked to complete informative paragraph regarding the activities of the staff survey to include the in the Annual Report. Further discussion was held around the follow up analysis. Sara Munson and Lisa vonPier reported that they have not had an opportunity to discuss the results and Sara discussed the workforce report that DCF will be completing and how to incorporate the data for that report with the staff survey results.

It was identified that the time frame for the workforce report would be around November. Sara would need the data files. Follow up would need to be done with Linda or Dawn Marlow to determine who owns the data files.

Marygrace Billek discussed that the Sustainability and Exit Plan (SEP) presentation from the DCF Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner should be another priority area as well as a focus area to follow up on in the coming year for SORS. Marygrace agreed to create a section regarding the SEP for the Annual report.

Mary Halloran requested that the subcommittee review the previous Annual Report section for Issues for Follow Up 2015-2016 to ensure that they are addressed in some way in this year's Annual report. Rita identified that #2 item had been postponed to allow the Professional Center time to work on the software enhancements as well as allow for the new Director to become acclimated. Rita suggested that this remain as a priority for 2016-2017 in the hopes of having an update presentation in the fall/winter of 2016.

The next discussion centered on item #3 regarding disproportionality and gathering information from the Essex County Model Court project. Lisa vonPier discussed that the project is still being examined and it may take them awhile so they are at this time not in a position to provide an update. There was a hearty discussion regarding whether there was an ask from the SORS regarding the racial makeup of the children or staff. Rita suggested taking the topic of disproportionality to training of staff, how is it addressed, cultural inclusiveness. Further discussion centered on the tools CP&P staff utilize when making decisions to remove children. Lisa discussed how the Structured Decision Making tool is in the process of being validated and revised in collaboration with a national expert. Lisa highlighted that the issues regarding disproportionality are broad and systemic to include socio-economic, community, etc... which is why it is taking the Essex County Model Court project more time than expected. Marygrace highlighted that the charge of the SORS involves review of staffing to make sure that the right staff are hired, the right training is in place for positive outcomes. Sara discussed that the training partnership offers a cultural competency class that has been offered 6-8 times over the past year which has been well attended. Sara also discussed that the results from the first DCF Workforce Report shows that the workforce racial makeup is in line with the racial makeup of the families and children that DCF works with. Sara reiterated that the Workforce Report is on the DCF website and was previously distributed. Request was made to find out what available trainings are offered in way of cultural competency, percentage of staff taking those courses and are they mandatory or voluntary. Lisa discussed required training as a new worker as well as mandated trainings for all staff as well as on-going professional development which is identified through discussions between a supervisor and a worker. Lisa further discussed that training for special populations such as children with developmental needs would be through a partnership with CSOC and that specialized units such as intake, adolescent, resource and adoption have mandated specialized trainings.

Lori Morris questioned whether the racial breakdown of the staff in the workforce report is broken down by county or statewide. Sara confirmed it was statewide. Lisa vonPier offered to have Human Resources come and provide a presentation on the aggressive recruitment process and how specific it is to certain communities to identify the type of staff is needed. Lisa reported that is how bi-lingual staff is targeted and recruited. Lisa reported that HR can give more specific information regarding the application, vetting the application, interview process, background checks and how Civil Service rules impact hiring and placement of staff in the state. Rita declined the offer to have HR come and stated that the topic of disproportionality as a whole should be bumped up to the Task Force at this time. The committee agreed but would still like feedback from the Professional Center regarding cultural competency training for staff.

The discussion transitioned into worker safety. Lisa vonPier discussed the aggressive work that DCF has done around worker safety to include an internal safety workgroup which includes representatives across the state and every CP&P local office has a safety workgroup as well that meets monthly, there is a new DCF Safety Director who works with staff and community partners such as law enforcement, all staff will have smart phones with emergency alert buttons. Lisa vonPier suggested inviting the DCF Chief of Staff and the Safety Director come and speak to the subcommittee. Discussion transitioned into concerns of staff causing a concern for a client and how do clients address it and or other staff who are aware. Lisa vonPier discussed that staff that is aware of inappropriate behavior of a staff member will follow the chain of command and it will be reported to employee relations. If there is a criminal action then it will be reported to police. Lisa further discussed discipline and termination and how staff has an opportunity to appeal their termination and most do.

Other discussions centered on the resource recruitment and retention presentation that was given in November and follow up information that was presented by MaryJane Arawchow. Rita will request MaryJane provide a paragraph about resource recruitment and retention for the Annual report. Discussion centered on the difference between the numbers of beds that are licensed versus the number of beds a resource family is actually willing to take. Lisa vonPier suggested that in the first quarter of 2017 to have Colette Tobias and Michelle Adams come back and provide an update on the resource recruitment and retention plan. Discussion continued around how recruitment has transitioned to professionals in the social service field.

Next topic discussed was the monitors report. Lisa and Aubrey Powers clarified that the most recent report that was published covered January to December of 2015 and the next report will be back on a 6 month cycle to cover January to June 2016.

Rita recapped the topics for follow up for the annual report included follow up on the staff survey analysis, have follow up presentation from the new Director of the Office of Training and Professional Development, also have a presentation from the Director of Safety and an update presentation from Michelle Adams and Colette Tobias for resource recruitment and retention. Lisa vonPier suggested in addition to the Safety Director who is responsive to the local offices, to also have the Chief of Staff to present on the safety directives of DCF as a whole. Lisa reported that the Safety Director is completing a safety assessment on each local office to determine if there are safety issues that need to be addressed such as insufficient lighting, etc... Lisa further

discussed safety protocols when there are known safety issues with clients for staff to include using a buddy system up to change in staff to work with the family.

Next Meeting:

Thursday September 22, 2016

Location: DCF Profession Center
30 Van Dyke Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ
Conference Room- 105

Announcements & Closure